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THE BIG HUNTER; or, The Queen of the Woods. A ROMANCE OF THE DAYS OF BOONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE SILENT HUNTER."



THE TALL HUNTER LEVELED HIS GUN. WHEN SUDDENLY. JUST AS HE WAS ABOUT TO PULL THE TRIGGER, THE BEING CAME WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF LIGHT, AND HE SAW THAT IT WAS AN INDIAN—AND A GIRL.

THE BIG HUNTER; OR, THE QUEEN OF THE WOODS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE SILENT HUNTER."

CHAPTER I.

THE WOODED PRAIRIE.

It is night upon the prairies; night over a plain which, since the universe came forth from the hands of its Creator, had never been visited by civilized man. Ages ago a tribe, of which we now know nothing, dwelt, it is believed, within the limits of the Ohio and the blue hills of the Cumberland; but they have passed away, and nothing remains to tell the story of their existence, but here and there a mound, and here and there a fragment or so of a peculiar pottery unknown to the red-skin.

We are within the region called Kan-tuck-kee, or the Dark and Bloody Ground: for ages the hunting-grounds and battle-fields of Shawnees, Chickasaws, and other Indians, though never their dwelling-place.

Strange! for fairer country never blessed the eyes of the hopeful emigrant. Lofty mountains, beautiful valleys, clear streams, rich land overhung by a bright blue sky, enveloped in verdant forests full of game—what more could be desired? There were to be found the necessities and luxuries of life—the buffalo, the wild turkey, droves of deer, sweet waters, and the coffee tree (like a black oak,) and the pawpaw tree with its cucumber-like fruit, and the black mulberry tree; to say nothing of an endless variety of beautiful flowers.

And yet this paradise—watered by many rivers—had not a dwelling, save one, within all its precincts; though the eyes of the adventurous white man are upon it, and the glorious but terrible days of Boone, and Harrod, and Logan, are coming on with swift and rapid strides.

It is night. The sun has gone down upon the distant Ohio in lurid splendor, the stars have not yet peeped forth from the dark canopy of clouds, the moon will not rise for hours; but still enough light is left in the air to distinguish objects at no great distance.

What is yon dark line in motion? What moving shadows are those? One would think it a stream of phantom warriors from the happy hunting-grounds—so silently, so ghostlike, do they advance, except that now and then they tread on some dry twigs, and give forth a crackling sound.

They are no phantom warriors!
They are Indians on the war-trail!

They cross an open clearing of a very peculiar character. It is perfectly circular, and surrounded on all sides by pine trees. It has little or no vegetation, except a short grass mixed with Shawnee salad; but being near a salt lick, it is much frequented by deer. The Indians cross the clearing by one of those beaten paths which are made by the buffalo in their visits to their favorite pasture-grounds, and thus leave no trail.

It is a noble group of men. Naked, all but the waist-cloth, their bodies are painted with every device that can inspire terror in the minds of their enemies; but their weapons are bows and arrows and tomahawks. They have no fire-arms, though perfectly aware of their use.

They are twelve in number; and from the extreme caution which they use, are evidently returning from a scouting party. They are probably now on their way to report progress, previous to carrying the devastating torch of war into some unsuspecting village of red-skins.

Soon the clearing is crossed. The first man, then the second, disappears under the leafy arches of the forest until even the faint-

est sound fails to indicate their position.

Again the clearing is empty; and not a sound can be heard but the sigh of the waving trees, or the cry of the sand-hill crane.

An hour passed; and then two men emerged from the forest, leading a horse.

These were whites, who, evidently, were on a new track, from the curious way they peered about over the clearing, which seemed to get darker and darker. The gloom, indeed, was so great that they could scarcely see one another.

"This will do fust rate," said the shorter of the two men; "and my idear is to begin onset. We've been rather short of game these last few days, and this child convenes to feeding."

"God never made another country half so beautiful as this," replied the other, in a solemn tone, as if communing with himself; "and here will I take up my abode. But you say true, Stewart. Light up and mount; I dare say we may get a bit of meat to-night."

Stewart, while the other—a tall, spare man—leaned on his rifle, was engaged in a rather singular occupation. He took from the horse's back a kind of flat iron dish, in which he placed a number of pine knots and cones, which he then proceeded to illumine by means of a flint and steel. The materials, being dry, soon rose to a flame; and with this utensil in his hand the hunter mounted the horse, and walked slowly out into the black night.

The tall man, cocking his rifle, followed slowly; keeping his eye fixed on the ground in front of the fire, where every moment he expected to see the eyes of a deer. Wild animals on the prairie, instead of being alarmed at the sight of such an advancing flame, come straight up to it, from sheer curiosity.

But on this occasion—whether from scarcity or shyness of game—they were disappointed for a considerable time and began to fear that nothing would turn up; when a low hiss from the tall hunter caused the horseman to check his steed and stand stock still. Just in front of the fire-pan could be seen two small shining eyes gazing fixedly at the strange apparition.

The tall hunter leveled his gun, when suddenly, just as he was about to pull the trigger, his experienced and keen sense of woodcraft told him that the eyes were on too high a level. At the same instant, the being before them came within the circle of light, and they saw that it was an Indian—and a girl.

Stewart dropped the pan of burning coals to the ground, and set off at a gallop, as if a whole tribe of Shawnees had been behind him shouting their hideous war-cry. The other stood still, gazing fixedly at the still stationary form; which, as the grass flared up in a blaze, he saw was that of both a young and beautiful girl.

He saw her, however, only for a moment; and when the fire went out, and the moon shone out upon the plain, he was alone.

Daniel Boone—though he had as yet most of his great adventures with Indians to go through—was too perfect a master of woodcraft not to look at once after his personal safety. Not doubting that the Indians would be after him in a moment, he made rapid tracks for the forest, casting a hasty glance every now and then as he did so over his shoulder. Over hill, over dale, through brook and brier wherever man's foot can

tread, they will go; and neither hunger nor thirst, nor time, is taken in account when they have an object in view.

Now, Daniel Boone had never been in this region before. Stewart had, and his desertion with the horse placed the brave hunter in a most painfully awkward position. He had neither moon nor stars to guide him—not even the wind; so that did he attempt to go any distance during the night, he might simply walk into the Indian camp.

Having, as far as he could judge, advanced about a mile in the direction taken by his companion, Daniel found himself on the edge of a ravine, so choked with trees as to be all but impassable. It was a strange place for a man to venture into, being likely to be infested with bears and snakes; but the hunter hesitated not. Stooping down, he began crawling on his hands and knees, under the bushes, down a steep descent, until at last he found himself in a kind of hole, so dark that he could not even see his own hand.

Here the undaunted man resolved to remain until dawn of day, when he would put in practice some of the devices by which even Indians, however cunning and wary, may be thrown off the scent.

CHAPTER II.

A RUN FOR LIFE.

THE song of birds, and a gradual descent of light into his den, which was really a hole overgrown by bushes, awoke Boone to a sense of his position. He might well start, as the gray dawn showed him a number of bones scattered about, indicative of the fact that he was in the lair of a panther. But the lion-hearted hunter cared little for that. It was his human enemies he feared.

Crawling upward, he collected a few berries as he went; and with these, satisfied the cravings of hunger. He was soon on the plain again, a kind of open prairie, interspersed with trees and bushes. To cross this prairie and leave no trail that an Indian would discover, was impossible; and yet cross it he must. Casting his long rifle into the hollow of his arm, and looking carefully about, lest he might fall into an ambush, he began walking forward, using, as much as possible, the gait of an Indian.

Those who know Daniel Boone, by the portraits taken of him when he became a hero, and which represent him as mere skin and bone, would scarcely have believed it could be the same person. Tall—he was over six feet—admirably built, but spare, with a noble forehead, and a clear gray eye, he was the model of a border-man. His skin, tanned by exposure, was, however, spread over sufficient flesh to make him handsome; while a dogskin cap, set jauntily on his head, a shooting jacket of untanned deer-hide, that had only at intervals of half-an-hour been off his back for months, leather breeches and leggings, gave him the appearance of what he really was—a mighty hunter.

His eye, however, spoke more than any thing else the true character of the man. It was clear, bright, and keen. Not a tree, not a bush, escaped his notice. Not a sign of the forest was lost upon him. Every now and then, too, he took a careful glance in his rear. Bright and glorious was the sun, the grass was spangled with dew, the birds began to sing in glorious harmony; and the adventurer who had an eye for the beautiful in nature, felt his great heart dilate within him.

No man ever more sincerely worshipped the native beauties of forest and field than Daniel Boone. His passion was hunting, but it was as much because he loved the green glade, the soft prairie, and the sparkling river, as from the excitement of killing. His delight was to go apart—to live away from his fellow-men—to follow the bear

to its den—the panther to its lair—the deer to its form; and live wholly on the product of the chase.

Years he did this at a time, even giving up the society of wife and children for the sake of his intense love for a wandering life amid the plains and forests of the middle ground.

He halts! A muddy patch is before him. He is suffering from intense thirst, which the rum-flask will not quench. He stoops, removes some of the fallen leaves, and in an instant is drinking from a bubbling spring that spreads across the plain, and makes a kind of swamp. But why does he remain still upon his knees, listening and peering under the low boughs of the trees?

Not a sound breaks the stillness of the forest, save where some squirrels are gamboling in a tree overhead, and wondering at the nature of the intruder, who is there below them on the ground. But the ear of a man close to the earth is supernaturally keen; and Daniel Boone had heard footsteps, the sound of many, too, as they came on with a dull tramp upon the soft grass.

The hunter knew they were upon his trail. What was to be done? To fight was out of the question. He might kill one or two; but in case of capture, this were better avoided, as it would insure his own torture and death. Flight was his only hope, and flight combined with such Indian arts as might defeat his enemies.

But the trail he had left was not so marked as to account for the rapid way in which the Indians were coming up. Boone was quite at fault, when suddenly catching sight of the party, the mystery was explained. A dog—one of those cunning, foxy, wiry animals, which infest Indian villages—was running along about twenty yards ahead of them; while, on a small white pony, guiding the canine animal, was the vision of the night before.

It was an Indian girl, about sixteen years of age, with a fanciful dress of tanned leather, beads and feathers. She was unarmed, but behind her came the naked, painted savages, clutching their tomahawks, and with their bows strung ready for action. Boone was a great runner; he had tried his speed with many a red-skin, and never had been defeated.

But he was now faint from want of food, and if something were not done to check the Indians, they would surely come up with him. Quick as thought, he leveled his long and unerring rifle, and next instant the dog rolled at the feet of its mistress. At the same moment every Indian disappeared, as if by magic; and Boone, regardless of the scene which ensued—the girl leaping off her horse to catch up her pet—darted away.

At all events, now the Indians would have to watch for his trail. To hide it at present was indeed useless; so slinging his gun on his back, he took to his heels away through the forest, over the open spaces, up hills and down slopes, at a pace which was killing. A terrific war-whoop let him know that the red-skins were again on his track, and coming up apace.

But he never turned. His restless eye was ever on the look-out for the opportunity to play the Indians some trick, which might throw them off the scent. One soon occurred. Before him was a swift and narrow stream, which he could not have forded. But it was bordered by tall, stout trees, from which depended to the very ground heavy grape vines, of which he well knew the strength.

Clutching one, and assuring himself that it would bear his weight, he drew back for a run, and then, making a fearful rush, swung himself off the ground, and in some such way as a pendulum acts was swept across to the other side, landing on the rocky bank, above where any marks on the clay might have betrayed him. Many a time

and oft after that day did Daniel Boone try the same experiment, and invariably with success.

Here, however, he had no time for reflection. Scarcely had he darted up a stony hillside, and cast himself behind a bush, when the infuriated Indians appeared on the other side, completely at fault. The trail ended at some little distance from the stream, while nowhere was there a trace of any place where the fugitive could have crossed. It was, indeed, a puzzling affair.

But the Shawnees were not to be set at fault in this way. In another moment, after a rapid and hasty conference, they scattered themselves along the banks, some up, some down-stream, until only one warrior remained. This man was a youthful brave, perhaps about two-and-twenty. He was perfectly made, his naked body showing an amount of muscle somewhat unusual in an Indian. His forehead was lofty, his black eyes gleamed with a terrible fire, while his mouth exhibited firmness, decision, and even vindictiveness. His hair was black, while his face was painted so as almost to disguise his features.

He alone had a gun—one of those fusils sold to the red-skins by the traders. This he held in his hand, while, with his keen and restless eyes, he examined every bush, blade of grass, and stone. All the time he jealously watched the opposite bank. Going a little way back from the stream, he examined, with extreme caution, the last sign of a trail. Suddenly he gave a low cry, as if he had been bitten by a snake, at the same time loosening his tomahawk.

His eagle eye had seen where the thick grape-vine had been nearly torn from the tree, and for an instant he believed that the hated long-knife was concealed in its branches. Then, quick as lightning, he fell on his face. He had seen the gleam of the terrible rifle-barrel as it slowly rose over the rocks. In another instant Telonga—such was his name—was concealed behind a tree.

CHAPTER III.

HAND-TO-HAND.

For an instant these warriors, one white and the other red, remained quite still; but there rose in the air the cawing of a crow, which was speedily answered from a distance. But Boone was not to be deceived. A scornful smile swept across his countenance as, crawling a yard or two down the slope behind him, he once more rose to his feet, and began to run for dear life.

"Red-skin dogs! do you think to trick a white man thus? You may run me down, but never take me by cunning!"

The sun was now hot in the extreme, and the fugitive began to feel sorely distressed. The country he was now passing over was arid and dry, and his moccasins began to give out. What could be done, then, should his enemies come up, but fight? He clutched his rifle nervously, he felt for his long knife, he glanced downward to see that his shot-pouch and powder-horn were safe, and then turned back.

Some of the Indians were in sight; at all events, two of them, who were coming up quickly. To his utter astonishment, they were armed with fusils. They, then, must be some fresh ones who had joined the pursuit. What, then, is he to do? They must soon run him down. Still he will not give in, but makes another spurt, darts into a thicket, and leaps behind the thick branch of a tree.

The two Indians were about a hundred feet apart, and coming up from different directions. This put an idea in Boone's head. He took measure with his keen eye of the distance, and when they were about a hundred feet off, suddenly showed himself to the one to his right, and leveled his gun.

At the sight of the much dreaded American rifle, the savage stopped still, and hurriedly fired. Taken thus by surprise, his aim was unsteady, and he hit the tree. Quick as lightning, Boone wheeled to the other side, and taking a calm and steady glance over his long rifle, fired. The Shawnee leaped into the air, and fell prostrate on his face to all appearance dead.

The other stood irresolute, as if unable to decide on a course of action. For a moment he appeared about to load his gun, but the long-knife was too much for him. With a terrible length of stride, which indicated his native personal strength, Boone was upon him, and next instant red-skin and white man were in hand-to-hand conflict. The Indian carried a heavy tomahawk, which he wielded with extreme dexterity, while Boone had only a long knife; so that it was with great difficulty he was enabled to parry the rapid strokes of the Indian.

In ordinary circumstances the white man would have retreated to where his gun lay, and have used it in a way in which the western rifle is almost equally to be dreaded as in its natural use. He would have clubbed it and brained the Indian.

But there was no time to be lost. The hunter knew that the others were coming up; that desolation, death, or, at least, captivity were in his rear; so receiving a sudden blow of the red-skin in his hand, he pulled the Indian with a sudden jerk toward him, and passed his knife with a fearful blow through his heart. The Indian slowly unloosed his hands, but stood upright for a moment, as if turned into a statue. He then looked fixedly at the white man. It was a long time ere he forgot that warrior's look. It was a mingling of defiance and admiration, without one atom of fear. The hunter felt a shudder pass through his own frame as the other fell back, with a half smile upon his lips—dead!

Boone drew forth the knife which had gone to the other's heart with a deep sigh. It was the first time he had knowingly shed human blood.

Remembering that the others could not be far distant, he searched the pouches of the Indians for parched maize and jerked meat, the only food taken on the war-trail, and having done this, broke the fusil off at the stock, and then fled. He had not gone a hundred yards, he had scarcely buried himself in the dense gloom of a thick wood, when he heard a loud and terrible cry, torn from the Indians by the sight of their unfortunate companions.

Now he knew that the battle was indeed for life, without a hope of mercy if taken.

Boone was at this moment near Green River Plains, which he wished to cross at a point which might enable him to reach a spot where, at all events, he might make one last stand against his fierce and relentless foes.

But his great object was to blind his foes as to the direction he had taken. For a time this was not only difficult but manifestly impossible. There was nothing, therefore, but to run for it, keeping his eyes before him, and selecting, with marvelous ingenuity, such places on which to leap as left the very least indication of the pressure of a foot.

In this way the forest was crossed and another prairie reached, this time of considerable extent, with here and there a bottom of timber and then a swamp or rice lake. Toward one of these Boone now made his way at the top of his speed. It was about a quarter of a mile in circumference, and could he but cross this, he would, at all events, put them off the scent for a while.

Selecting a spot where the bank was higher than in other places, the fugitive made one bound, and leaped many yards out into the swamp. Down, down he sunk, his feet being at once in thick and

slimy mud. But hesitation was death, and, with a hasty flounder, the intrepid man moved on nearly up to his arm-pits, until he reached a waving field of rice, where the foundation was more solid, and he halted to breathe and restore himself by food and drink.

While swallowing his jerked beef and maize, he cast uneasy glances back upon the water-trail. Where he had forced himself along, the mud had risen to the surface, while bubbles came up every instant from the depths below, tell-tales that no ingenuity of his could overcome. It was, however, gradually settling down, a soft wind was blowing the swampy lake into ripples, and should the Indians tarry but ten minutes more the chances are he may be saved.

But there they came, twenty painted warriors bounding across the plain in defiance of all rule; for have they not their comrade to avenge, and is not the pale-face alone? Soon they reached the swamp, and ran round it in circles, with frantic gestures. But nowhere can they make out which way he has gone.

It is now afternoon. The chase has been weary and long. The Indians are evidently mad with rage. But soon their more stoical nature returns to them. At a cry from their chief, whose character and history will be more fully developed as we advance, they collected round him. A brief conference took place, after which the trail of the white man was once more carefully examined. It did not take long to decide their course of action.

Without the slightest warning, a flight of arrows was discharged at every clump of rice stalks which by any possibility could have concealed the hunter. As chance, or perhaps good luck, would have it, one struck the dogskin cap of the cool and collected pioneer of civilization and discovery, and there remain fixed. But he moved not a muscle. Even a shake of the head would have betrayed him. But there was the feathery part in the air, quiet and firm, as if imbedded in a floating log, and the Indians turned away, as if satisfied.

But Boone was not to be caught this way. When the very last man disappeared over the bank he moved not a muscle. He knew that twenty pair of eyes were still peering over the waters of the swamp, and that any attempt to move would be fatal. So there he remained, nearly up to his neck in water, his gun resting on a few floating boughs, and himself stiff and motionless until the sun went down over the western hills, and darkness was on the face of all nature.

To remain any longer in this attitude was out of the question, so he moved slowly along through the rice until he found the water shoaling. This was awkward, as, if the Indians were still upon the look-out, the appearance of his tall form outlined against the evening sky, would be sure to bring not only a dozen shots, but also send the warriors to cut off his retreat.

What was to be done?

He was surrounded by rice, while he himself was in clear water, which continued very nearly to the shore. A number of small boughs and trunks of trees were lying about the debris of the woods which, in several places, surrounded the lake. Looking keenly about, the wily white man cast a small piece of wood into the water, which, after the ripples which followed its immersion settled down, at once floated toward the shore between two straight lines of rice stalks.

This, then, was the outlet. No sooner was this discovery made, than Boone drew from out of the rice enough wood to make a small raft big enough to support a small upright stump on which he placed his cap with the arrow still sticking in it. It was so arranged as to be clearly visible above the rice, and this once settled, Boone push-

ed it forward in such a way that it admirably represented a man creeping toward the shore.

The keen ear of the hunter caught the faint accents of a low murmur along the shore, and then he saw the whole body of savage creeping low to cut off his retreat. Not an instant was to be lost. Taking a long breath, he entered the deep water, and half wading, half swimming, at length reached the shore just as a loud yell proclaimed that the Indians had discovered this cunning and successful device to circumvent them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BLOCK-HOUSE.

EARLY next morning—transporting ourselves to some little distance from the rice swamp—we find ourselves upon another plain, which, without having many claims to beauty, has other advantages in connection with it. It is richly fertile, though now overgrown with weeds, reeds, rank grass, with here and there a pecan-bush, a coffee-tree, or a dwarf mulberry; but which, ere many years shall have passed, will have a splendid city in its eastern confines and waving corn-fields all around.

Now there is but one solitary sign of human life, and that is a block-house.

It is a single square log-house, built of huge unhewn trunks, and raised four feet from the ground by means of piles driven deeply into the earth. It has a huge puncheon door, swinging on substantial wooden hinges, and shutting with a wooden latch. It has a second story like a half-roofed terrace. It has no windows, as a few chinks admit sufficient light.

About twenty yards from the building grazes a horse, while on the steps of the log-hut—these steps being simply a sloping ladder, with wide cross-beams—sits a man. He is dressed in frontier garb, and his attitude is deeply contemplative. He is smoking a pipe, and leaning on a rifle.

To anybody who has seen that dress he is at once recognizable. It is true prairie. There is an old leathern hunting-shirt, much the worse for wear and dirt, there are leggings and moccasins equally patched, wrinkled and worn. There is a dirty, negro-looking hat—but there is a first-rate shooting-iron or rifle, which has done some service in its day.

Every now and then the smoker, without raising his head, sends forth huge puffs of smoke, as if he were thinking profoundly. Perhaps he is thinking of his panic-stricken desertion of Daniel Boone, for those are the clothes, and that is the splendid rifle, of the wandering trapper and trader who fled from the Shawnee girl.

Weary, faint, exhausted, but by his clever trick, and by wading subsequently against the current of a mountain stream, having thrown the Indians off the scent, yonder comes Boone. He is gliding, we might almost say tottering, through a small thicket of cotton trees. None of his caution has departed.

Never during the two years that he had lived almost alone on Boonesville prairie, had he approached the log-hut, which he and five others—who afterward got tired and returned to North Carolina from whence they all came—had erected, without the most extreme caution. Though the situation was in such a curve near a stream as to be out of the way both of hunters and warriors, still, at any time, a stray red-skin might discover his residence, and lay in an ambush to obtain the supposed riches within, as well as his rifle, that would be a prize to an Indian.

His keen eye would fix itself upon every point of the plain, he would examine the still log-hut with a scrutinizing glance. He would peer into the long grass which grew in some places close up to the block-house, and never

approached except in a circuitous manner.

On the present occasion he was unusually cautious. There were Indians about, and in their prowlings they might at last have discovered his residence. As soon as he came to the verge of the cotton-wood, which was one hundred yards from the block, he took a survey of the whole scene. He saw the house still and calm, he saw the horse grazing to the right, he saw the well-known cap, pipe, and rifle of Stewart.

But why this strange stillness?

It seemed to him that there was something unnatural in the air. A sense of coming evil oppressed him, and he forbore to give the welcome shout with which at last he generally approached his own dwelling. He even slunk behind some trees, and approached crawling. No sooner was he on his knees than his marvelous organ of sight, which was mainly the cause of his many wonderful shots, enabled him to see, despite the impediments which lay between, four naked savages seated at the foot of a hillock, where they were screened from view at the block, smoking quietly, with their bows and arrows at their feet.

They were in ambuscade.

But why had they spared Stewart? unless, indeed, they wished to entrap both. This was a plausible and probably correct surmise, so Boone continued crawling on with that calm serenity of manner, which bespeaks the practiced hunter of the prairies. The Indians are now two hundred feet to his left, while he is fifty feet from the block.

It will be safe to run for it now. Both he and Stewart will gain the inside of the block, and by means of the loop-holes on the second floor, defend it as long as powder and food last.

But why does Daniel Boone glare so horribly in the direction of the block? why does he cock his rifle? why does he take careful aim at the heart of that white hunter? why does he shoot, and then rush with a wild cry to the log-hut, spurn the dying wretch with his foot, snatch up his rifle and powder-horn, and dash inside the hut, closing fast and barricading the door behind?

They are the clothes of poor John Stewart, who only fled in a temporary panic, but they are worn by a cunning Indian warrior.

Yonder vultures soaring in the air proclaim where lies the body of the trapper.

Boone caught up a demijohn of rum, which still remained from the stores designed for the town which he and his pioneers intended erecting there, and swallowed a good draught. He was now alone. His companion, against whom he had momentarily felt so much anger, was murdered, and what could he expect, surrounded as he was by raging red-skins who thirsted for his blood?

But he was resolved to die game. He had powder and ball, some maize, some salt, and dried meat, and he had water. The ingenuity of the hunter, had above all been shown in this particular. He had planted his hut in the center, not exactly of a swamp, but where for a hundred feet around the land was wet and soggy, from the outpourings of a spring over which he had erected his residence.

The block rested on six stout piles, one of which was hollow, and furnished with a rude pumping apparatus which he had himself executed with much labor and ingenuity. Thus prepared, he knew that many indeed must bite the dust ere they could hope to defeat him.

For some time nothing could be heard but the groans of the dying Indian, mingled with the song of birds, that caroled in the heavens as if man, that is made in the image of his Maker, were not arrayed against man in bloody and mortal conflict.

Then Boone peered forth from a crack in the hut, and saw one Indian crawling along the ground, in the direction of the body. The

hunter knew that he came to carry off his companion, and thus save his scalp, and as this was a sacred duty he made no attempt to prevent him.

The Shawnee suddenly caught up the now dead Indian, and, with a frightened glance at the block-house, started off as fast as his legs could carry him. In five minutes more not a sign of the enemy was anywhere to be seen. This was, of course, Indian policy, as was also the absolute freedom from attack which he enjoyed that day.

Daniel Boone had two rifles, an old musket, and a brace of horse-pistols, which might prove useful in a close attack. Placing these to his hand, and putting his trust in Heaven, he laid himself down at nightfall, and enjoyed the first sound sleep which had been vouchsafed to him for some days. He awoke a little before daylight, and was at once aware that some one was at work at his door.

Something like a chisel was being slowly, and with extreme caution, worked just under the latch.

Holding his breath, he rose, peered through the narrow apertures between the logs—which were wider inside than out, where they were scarcely visible—and fired both pistols; then up to the roof he ran, and fired both guns after the fugitives, some ten in number, who, once more repulsed, attacked him no more that day.

Indeed from that hour their tactics changed. They had discovered what a terrible master of the rifle dwelt in that lonely block-house, and they felt no inclination to confront its terrors any more. They resolved, then, to starve him out. That hut could not contain much food, certainly little water; so that they had but to blockade him, and the victory was their own.

Once repulsed in an attack, this is in general the tactics of the Indian.

For seventeen days, from the rising to the setting of the sun, and from the hour when darkness falls upon the scene until again the tree-tops are tipped with gold, did they watch like hungry wolves for their prey—in vain. He seemed never to sleep. The slightest attempt to attack was repelled, and several warriors bit the dust.

The young men began to get weary, and to ask themselves if this was, indeed, a man who lived without water. Even to their acute and able chief this was a mystery. He must, however, discover by what means the long-knife supplied himself, and for this purpose three youths were posted at day-break in the tall grass close to the hut, to watch. They were nearly naked, and clutched their bows and arrows, while on their hands and knees they watched the hut.

Meanwhile his provisions giving out, the water, as the heat increased, coming up dirty and in small quantities, the heroic trapper began to feel his sinewy frame affected, his mind to be discouraged, and his very soul to long for a scamper on the prairies, or a hunt in the woods. Many times he regretted that he had not tried to reach the horse and thus escape.

But repinings are useless. What is to be done? All day sheltered by his slanting roof, he peers out upon the plain, in the vain hope that the savage red-skins will weary of their siege. But no—the longer it lasts the more inveterate they become.

He must act. Shall he trust to his heels? No; that is impossible. He will be remorseless, he will pick off every red-skin within range. But he will now go down and breakfast; he has merely come up to take his usual survey. But why does he halt? why does he attach an old cravat to the top of his rifle, and wave it in the air? why does he rouse the echoes of the forest with his joyous cries?

Hurrah! brave hunter—you shall not perish this time, succor is at hand.

CHAPTER V

RESCUE.

THE Indians had bounded to their feet and fled as soon as they heard his shouts. Two of their number, however, fell before they reached the forest: half-a-dozen cracks of the old American rifle proclaiming the nature of the force which was at hand. In ten minutes more, Daniel Boone was shaking hands with his elder brother, Harrod, Logan, and two other white men well-known to him, while another was being introduced to him.

This was a youth of about twenty. He was tall, exceedingly handsome, with massive and regular features, brown hair and eyes, and skin which, once fair, or, rather, pale, was bronzed by exposure to the air. He, like all his companions, was mounted on a broad-chested and strong-limbed horse.

He was introduced to Daniel Boone as Edward, or, as the hunters called him, Ned Harris. He was out on his first hunt, and if his jaunty apparel, his new jerkin, showy high boots and smart cap with eagle-feather in the front; if his handsome rifle from England, and other appointments, had once excited a smile on the part of the rude pioneers of the American prairie, his calm demeanor, his splendid style of shooting, and the coolness with which he had delivered his first fire, had long since won their admiration and respect.

Those who, like the sportsmen of the present day, reach the uttermost limits of western civilization by means of railways, and hunting for a week, return with strange stories of perils in the wilds, can form no conception of what those heroes suffered, who, leaving the settlements, wandered through pathless forests, crossed raging rivers, and hiding from the Indians for days and weeks in some solitary cache, endured the extreme tortures of both hunger and thirst. But their energy was indomitable. Never weary, never conquered, they advanced still on toward the setting sun, laying first the foundations of home and then of empire.

Edward—or, as we shall call him, Ned Harris—was one of these. Educated with a view to a profession, he had suddenly left the seaboard cities, and plunged into the border villages, where he had devoted himself to such sports as gave him practice with the rifle. Having, by means of a keen eye and a steady hand, acquired considerable excellence, he had volunteered to join the second party of explorers to Kentucky, who went to search for a new home, and also with a faint hope of finding Boone, who had been absent two years and seven months.

Breakfast was brought out, the horses were hopped, and then, while knives were used with energy only known to the hunter, they all listened to the story of the solitary man who, alone in his block-house, defended himself for seventeen days against some twenty painted savages.

All heard his narrative with admiration, for though told with exceeding modesty, it was impossible for the narrator to hide the part he had played.

His story once told, a council was held. Daniel Boone at once announced his intention of living and dying in the newly-discovered land. All acquiesced except Harris, who made no remark. But before they ventured on bringing up their wives and little ones, it was necessary to explore the country, select habitations, and as much as possible clear it of Indians. These men—and their descendants are little better—set no more value on the life of an Indian than on that of a dog.

It was resolved, after some debate, at all events to follow up the track of the retreating Shawnees, and discover whether they had really left and crossed the river to their homes, or whether they had simply gone off for reinforcements, with which to return and exterminate

nate the pale-faces who had dared to invade the hereditary hunting-grounds of the great Indian people.

But safely to outlie in the woods, with an Indian force in their front, and the forest alive, perhaps, with red-skins, required an amount of caution, skill, and courage almost superhuman. Still these men were not to be turned from their purpose. And this is the way they set about it.

Near to the spot where the two forks of Kentucky river met, and about a mile from the block-house, was a kind of delta, formed by a sluggish bayou, which ran from fork to fork.

Here the horses were driven, with little fear of their straying, as the pasturage was good. At all events, there was no help for them. They could not think of following the back trail of the Indians except on foot, as the forests would be full of scouts, and the trail of horses it was impossible to conceal.

This having been effected in as perfect and satisfactory a manner as possible, the men proceeded to draw lots as to those who should go together. It was resolved that small parties were safest. There, of course, would be one man alone, but none shrunk from danger of any kind.

Some pieces of wood were cut in lengths, two being similar, and those who drew them were to go together. The lots were quickly drawn, and then it turned out, while Harrod was to go alone, Daniel Boone and Ned Harris were to go together. First, however, they would select a starting-point and then separate, while signals and meeting-places were all agreed on.

If nothing rendered a meeting necessary before, they were all to be that day week at a place called now Knob Lick Warrens. All were ready, and Daniel Boone led the way. He had a purpose in this, for he wished his companions to have as much enthusiasm as he had with regard to this lovely country. Taking his way at the back of his log-hut, he led them after a time up a steep ascent on the very borders of the great forest wilderness.

When America has her historical cartoons—cartoons representing better things than battles—they will surely paint this scene, where seven stalwart hunters are winding their way up a steep ascent. They all have hunting-shirts or loose open frocks of dressed deerskin, save one. They have leggings and drawers, they have coarse undergarments of cotton, they have leather belts around the body, they have hunting-knives, powder horns, and bullet-pouches, while, of course, they have rifles.

Their garments are soiled and torn, for they have forced their way by an obscure trail, through shrubs and over logs. They are what some would call poor and mean-looking people; but they are nature's true heroes—men who deserve the lasting esteem and regard of that posterity which enjoys so easily what they so hardly won.

Daniel Boone, who was still ahead, suddenly stopped, and waved his hand. His companions rushed forward at the signal, and there before them, like a map, was spread the rich and beautiful land watered by the beautiful Kentucky, with its rolling prairies and vast forests, over which roamed the buffalo, the deer, and other forest animals, scarcely as yet perceptibly thinned even by the marauding Indians of whom they were in search.

All these men drew a long breath as they gazed at the lovely prospect.

"Is it not a country," said Boone, as he leaned upon his rifle, "is it not a country for which a man might fight?"

"Hurrah!" shouted the hunters. "Then," said Boone, pointing to a narrow and deep gorge, where a large tree had fallen almost hid

by a dense thicket, "In a week, there."

Then all shook hands, and each party, according to his fancy, chose a pathway. Boone set the example, and led Ned Harris after him, until no one remained upon the brow of the hill save Harrod, the Silent Hunter, lost in ecstasy at the scene on which he gazed, which was to be the theater of exploits, which have caused his name never to be forgotten. It never will while the student of border history cares to read of the terrible deeds which made the Dark and Bloody Ground so noted a spot, and while anyone cares to know of the bullets, murders, and heroic deeds which preceded the settlement of beautiful Kentucky.

CHAPTER VI.

OUT IN THE WOODS.

DANIEL BOONE had noticed the proud and gratified glance of the youth's eye when he found he was to be the companion of the great pioneer of the forest. Naturally enough, the simple backwoodsman was flattered at the other's preference, and secretly vowed that if they were thrown much together, he would endeavor to make him as good a woodman as himself.

He had cause to keep his words. "You ain't been much used to this work," he said, as they came to the edge of the forest, "eh, Mr. Harris?"

"Call me Ned, sir," replied the other.

"Well, Ned it is, if you don't sirree me. Let it be Boone."

"I am not much used to this work, it is true; but I wish to be."

"You know little about Injines, and their tricks and devilments?" continued Boone.

"I only know," said the youth, with a dark and gloomy frown, "that I loathe them. I am tempted even at times to shoot down the peaceful ones who stray to the eastern villages; though they are killing themselves fast enough with fire-water."

"Why, young man?"

"Don't question me, Boone just now. You pour boiling oil upon recent wounds. But why did you ask me at first?"

"Because it is but fair to warn you of what we may have to do. This forest, may be, swarms with them, and we must carry our lives in our hands. Stop! never tread on them nettles. Look!"

And the hunter, to illustrate his theory, placed his long foot on a peculiar kind of nettle which abounded in the forest, and which, when trod upon, never rises, but retains a mark as distinct as that of snow.

"Never," said the hunter, stooping and destroying the tell-tale plant, "never tread on them things while there's Injines about. The devils will examine every inch of ground, and once they fall on such a mark, will never leave the scent more than a dog. Mind now, pick out hard dry places."

At this moment they found that what they had fancied was the skirt of the forest was in reality merely a strip of forest trees, and that a huge cane-brake lay between them and the vast wilderness of trees. Fortunately, there was a buffalo-path hardly beaten, which they followed, Boone first, Harris close behind, both keeping a sharp look-out for a lurking enemy.

The buffalo-path having been crossed, they were again in sight of the forest. Boone, as usual, before emerging from any cover, gazed out from the cane-brake. All was clear, and again in a few minutes they were beneath the leafy arches of the forest, where a little sparkling rill flowed down toward the river.

"You must stride over that, Ned," said the hunter, with a quiet chuckle, "so as to leave no mark."

Ned looked astonished. The rill, which even in the middle was not three inches deep, spread over a wide bed of gravelly soil.

"It is not to be done," he replied.

Boone smiled drily, and acquiesced; but then sat down, and took off his moccasins, after which he waded through the water a little above the buffalo-path; and his companion imitating him, they were soon on the other side. On examination, they found that the flowing water had obliterated their trail.

"Now, youngster," said Boone, in his paternal but jovial way, "I haven't got my seven-league boots on yet. Them Injines who cooped me up yonder haven't taken a bit of spunk out of me, but it will take a day or two to pull me up again. So I'm going to eat."

And without further preface, the hunter sat down and began to eat of the provisions which the hunters had brought. Ned Harris did the same, as, having for some time been used to riding, a walk through a cane-brake, preceded by a clamber up a hill, was not without its fatigues.

About an hour later they entered the wood, Daniel Boone making as much as possible in the direction whence the Indians who had pursued him had come, but advancing very slowly, as every bush and brier, every tree or fallen log, might prove an ambush.

Suddenly Boone stood still, and caught Ned Harris by the arm.

"What is it?"

"Look yonder," replied Boone, pointing with his finger.

Ned looked, and saw a clear column of smoke rising from above the trees, at no great distance, they being at the moment in a kind of clearing overgrown by briers, and pecan-nut bushes.

"What does it mean?" asked Harris.

"It must be Injines," said Boone, thoughtfully, "and yet it is very strange. That smoke comes from green wood. But follow, and we'll soon see."

Creeping along, their backs bent low, their very breath withheld, avoiding nettles and dry sticks, the crack of which will startle Indians at a considerable distance, they gradually approached the fire. They were soon again beneath the arches of the forest. They now knew only the direction, and might easily lose it, as under the shadow of the trees it is almost impossible to move in a straight line.

"You stand still," said Boone, "with your face to me. I can't miss them as long as by turning I can see you. If I do so," (imitating the hoot of an owl), "come up. If I shoot—well, I needn't tell you."

And with his rifle ready, the cautious hunter started on his way, only occasionally glancing back toward his human finger-post.

Suddenly Ned heard the hoot of the owl, and hurried off to join his companion.

"It is an Injine camp," he said, leaning on his gun, "but that makes it stranger. They've camped here all night, and made a fire of dry wood, but after they had finished, somebody had thrown on green wood; now, young man, what does that portend?"

Ned Harris modestly replied, that he did not know.

"You will have much to learn, if you would wage war with this people," said Daniel Boone, solemnly; "them dry boughs speak volumes to me plainer than any print my old Irish schoolmaster tried to teach me."

"May I ask what?" replied Ned.

"The Indians are hunting and amusing themselves. They halted here last night, and with their usual care made a fire of very dry sticks, which, of course, made scarcely any smoke. Now, after their departure, somebody has lingered behind and thrown on the green wood—of course, a prisoner."

"A prisoner!"

"Yes; and surely a white prisoner; for who else would try to guide us?"

Edward Harris' face grew dead-

ly pale, as he clenched his rifle.

"A white prisoner, perhaps a woman, a delicate girl-like—but no, my lips can not bring themselves to pronounce the name. Let us follow."

"Softly! softly! young man. Daniel Boone is not going to turn his back on any one in the way of helping a fellow-creature, but we must be cautious. Follow me and tread in my footsteps across this soft earth, where them Injines have left a trail like a cart-wheel."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SMALL FOOT TRAIL.

DANIEL BOONE led the way, his eyes apparently fixed on the ground, but at the same time alive to every sign of the forest. He was intently examining the broad and careless trail of the savages, who seemed to be in such force as to care little for any prospect of pursuit on the part of the whites, whatever little advantage they themselves might obtain from an attack.

"See," said Boone, suddenly, pointing out a mark of a footprint smaller than usual, "that's a gal, and if I know any thing of gals, it ain't quite squaw-like. It turns out the toes rather too much."

"Great Heavens!" cried Ned Harris, "a white girl, and in the power of these remorseless savages!"

"Hush! hush! man, or the Injines will think I've got a missionary along with me. Such another loud speech ought to bring a dozen arrows into your skin."

Daniel Boone said this in a low tone, and almost severely.

"I beg your pardon," half-whispered Harris, "but whenever I hear of white maidens carried away by these accursed red-skins, I know no restraint to my feelings."

"Do you wish to help this little one?" replied Boone, bluntly.

"As I hope for mercy."

"Silence, and follow," said Boone.

Not a word more was spoken. Boone, with an unerring correctness that might have served as a model to an Indian, followed the track. But the Indians were moving quickly, and here and there, where buffalo-paths intervened, or where a stream invited some of their usual artifices, they lost the track; so that when it came to the time of the setting sun they were still not up with them.

"I'm tired; that's a fact," said Daniel; "but one night's quiet rest will put me all to rights. We mustn't sleep in the forest."

"Where then?"

"In the cane-brake," replied the intrepid hunter, and into the cane-brake he led the way.

It was a strange abiding-place enough, but it was safer than the forest, and very soon after a hearty meal, Daniel Boone, careless of water, or any other inconvenience, indifferent to snakes, was in a deep slumber, the first genuine sleep that he had enjoyed for seventeen days.

But Ned Harris could not sleep. Thoughts of other days, burning thoughts which consumed him to the soul, kept him restless and sleepless, while, as soon as dark night fell upon the forest and brake, there came the dismal howl of half-famished wolves to make night hideous.

They seemed quite close, and as Ned Harris could make out the direction, he determined to give them a lesson. For this reason he laid hold of his rifle, and had already cocked it, when a hand restrained him.

"Are you weary of your life, young man?" said the low voice of Daniel Boone.

"Tis hungry wolves," whispered Harris.

"Where the wolves are there is the quarry. Them roaring brutes are round the Indian camp, waiting for the bones and offal."

"The Indian camp, so close—"

"Yes, young man—and if you would not be a prisoner speak below your breath. The night air carries sound strangely."

"I should like to crawl toward them," said Harris.

"Not to-night. While so near my block-house they will keep good watch. Every night their vigilance will relax. Take my advice, and sleep; you may want all your strength for to-morrow."

And Daniel Boone, turning round, was again in a few minutes in a deep sleep. Ned Harris, aware that the other was right, followed his example, nor did he wake until two hours after dawn.

"The Injines are gone," said Boone, with a dry chuckle; "see the wet smoke."

A quarter of an hour later they were in the camp, now deserted even by the wolves, which, having plucked the bones and devoured every thing they could find, had absconded.

Again, as they expected, a handful of damp and green wood had been cast on the fire.

"That captive," said Boone, "is pretty free, or it couldn't be done. Well, it's mighty strange; so all we can do is to catch up."

Again they were on the trail, this day being able to follow it with greater rapidity and certainty, both because the hardy, robust, sinewy frame of Boone was recruited, and because the Indians straggled on the path and made no secret of their march.

In this way, about mid-day, they reached the foot of a slope, at the summit of which was a pleasant grove of trees. The slope itself was chiefly covered with brush-wood, which grew in places to the height of ten feet. Through this at times they had to make their way. Both were eager to reach the summit, as both required a cool rest and refreshment.

"A fine place for an ambush, this," said Boone, casting his eyes warily round.

At the same instant, Harris leveled his rifle, with a savage cry.

"Shoot, at your peril!" cried Boone, knocking up his gun; "they are too many."

At the same moment, as Boone first spoke, a dozen painted Indians, armed with tomahawks, knives, and guns, had burst upon them from bushes so near as to render flight impossible and resistance madness. In less time than it takes to write, the two white men were seized, disarmed, and dragged in triumph up the hill, whence they had been descried in the plain below.

The Shawnees by whom they had been captured were in raptures as they dragged the captives before their chief. In obedience to a hint from Boone, Harris assumed, as well as he could, an indifferent mien. Neither showed the slightest mark of weakness or of fear.

They were taken before Telonga, who, all the while the ambuscade had been carried out, had stood with his back against a tree, as apparently indifferent to the result as if he were a piece of the trunk of the forest giant.

"What seek the pale-faces," he said, sternly, as he eyed the fugitives with some complacency; "what seek the palefaces in the hunting-grounds which the Manitou hath given to the red-man?"

"We were hungry, and we killed venison; we were thirsty, and we drank water," replied Boone, boldly, in the Shawnee tongue, which he had singularly enough well mastered.

"My brother speaks with a forked tongue," observed Telonga, with a dark frown; "when the long-knives came across the waters in a floating house they said the same—what replied the red-skin?"

"Eat and drink; as I suppose a brave that has led his warriors to battle will say to two white men who have never injured him."

"Where sleeps Tarké? where lies Michinigua?" asked the warrior, darkly, as he pointed in the

direction where had occurred the fight between Boone and the two Indians. "I have spoken. My father said to the long-knives—eat, drink, and build yourselves wigwams—there is room for both. But the pale-faces were greedy—they brought their fire-water and they made the red-man mad—and he signed away his land. Then, when he was in his senses, and could not know what he had done when the fire-water had taken away his brains, they brought their fire-bows and they killed the braves, until not one can be found near the great Father of Waters."

"Because some did ill, why should we be punished?" said Boone, with some little of jesuitism.

The warrior glared at him, and turning his back gave some directions in his own tongue, the purport of which they did not catch. But they were immediately seized and tied to a tree by means of thongs in such a dexterous way that they could not move hand or limb.

The Indians then retired to a distance, and sitting down in a circle proceeded to hold what Daniel Boone knew to be a big talk.

"Well, youngster," said the hunter in his most cheerful and happy voice, "what do you think of this?"

"My life is of little value," replied Ned Harris, quietly. "I have no object in life."

"Don't you despond," replied Boone. "I brought you into this scrimmage, and, please God, I'll get you out of it. But see you!"

Ned Harris did not hear him, for he was already gazing in the direction indicated.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEALLIWAH.

1 WHEN the Indians retired to hold their conference with regard to the fate of the great hunter and his young friend, the prisoners were under the impression that they were alone. Brave as they were, they may readily be forgiven, if in the first instant of their capture they were slightly confused. This state of mind, however, only lasted for a short time. They then looked around in the faint hope of discovering some circumstance which might awaken the hope of escape.

Then it was that they found they were not alone.

Seated on a log, in an attitude of deep thought, was a young Indian girl, whose dress and drapery was unusual, except in the case of the young wife or daughter of a great chief. Her face and arms, which were alone naked, were painted, disguising in some degree the characteristics of her features, but utterly unable to conceal the fact of her great and entrancing beauty. Her eyes were almond-shaped, while long silken lashes fell almost upon her cheek; her forehead was of medium height, while her hair, instead of being the usual black, was brown, but apparently snort. This appearance, however, perhaps arose from the fact that it was so mixed up, twisted, and adorned with beads, feathers and small arrows, as to present almost a solid mass. Her countenance was oval and as varied sensations filled her heart, she became pale or rosy, even through the dusky skin and dusky paint. Her supple and elegant form, rounded and yet slight, was covered by a well-fitting jacket of soft whity-brown leather, made from the fawn, profusely adorned with beads and split quills. Below this was a petticoat of similar materials, reaching to the knees; and again below this, handsome leggings and moccasins.

Edward Harris gazed curiously, interestedly, then ardently at her.

That she was beautiful beyond what he had ever imagined an Indian maiden could be, was self-evident; but what would he not give to hear her speak? All the

hunters and trappers of that time could speak the Indian language with tolerable fluency. In pursuance of the purpose of a life, Edward Harris had made several dialects his study.

He determined to try his hand.

"Indian maiden," he said, in a soft, low tone, "the prisoners of your braves are thirsty. Will the Singing Bird of the forest give us to drink?"

The girl rose like a startled fawn, and looked around. She gave a quick glance to the right and left, as if in surprise at the absence of the warriors, and then stood meekly with her arms folded.

"What said the pale-face hunter to the red-skin girl?" she asked, in a quiet way.

"Water," said Harris, who, now she stood up, was scarcely able to speak from feelings of admiration and rapture.

He quite forgot the position in which he was placed.

The girl turned away, and disappeared for one instant in the bushes, immediately, however, coming back with a large gourd, with which she advanced to where the young man was tied to the tree. As his hands were useless, she raised the gourd to his lips. He drank heartily, for his thirst was burning.

"My sister is very kind," exclaimed Edward Harris, with a fire which was indicated both by his tone and the flashing of his dark eye. "Will she give a drink to the young hunter's friend?"

The girl moved quietly to the next tree, with a grave smile.

"It ain't much use," observed Boone, dryly, "as them catamounts will soon show you."

The girl glanced over her shoulder. The warriors were just visible about a hundred yards distant. Boone glanced longingly at their two rifles, which lay at his feet.

"Young man," said Boone, with a grim smile, "you are handsome and well favored, and the maiden is comely beyond any I ever saw. Talk to her. She's got a pretty plaything of a knife by her side. One twist, and we are free."

Ned Harris gave an imploring look into the eyes of the maiden, who was watching him with evident interest and attention.

"My sister is good and kind; she will not see the white man murdered. Let us go, and before two moons a boat-load of beads and blankets shall be sent to her people; and the Singing Bird shall be the richest in my tribe."

"Telonga is a great chief," said the girl, still examining the youth keenly; "he will decide. Is my white brother afraid to die?"

"No!" replied Edward, hotly—"no, girl, not afraid to die when the time comes. But look you, girl—have you no father, no mother, no tie?"

"I am alone," she said, sadly; "when twelve moons are past, I shall be in the wigwam of Telonga."

"Well, girl, I have a father and a mother, who love me dearly, who would have made me rich and happy; but I can not forget. Years ago, when I was a boy, your people came; they burned and destroyed, and they stole away a little girl, who was to have been my wife. It is in search of her I have come. I believe she was taken by your tribe. If she be alive, I will pay them ransom; if she be dead, I am ready to die too."

"In our tribe there are many white slaves. What was the little girl called by the pale-faces?"

"Constance," said Ned, eagerly.

The girl bowed her head over her folded arms and reflected deeply. Her pretty little foot struck the ground. She was evidently trying to recollect.

"There are many white maidens in our tribe. Let the young hunter of the whites say that word again."

Harris, with beaming eye and panting breath, repeated the name.

The Indian girl clasped her hands, laughed merrily, but so soft-

ly, so muscally, as to reach the young man's heart.

"There is a girl, white as snow, whose name sounds like that which my brother has spoken. You must seek for her in the great Valley of the Cedars."

"All very well," said Boone, impatiently; "but if we are ever to get there, just lend us a hand, young woman. I'm a warrior and can die, but as I wish to do some work yet as wants to be done, I am in no hurry to have my hair lifted."

"Telonga is a great warrior, and he loves me," said the girl, thoughtfully and sadly; "but if the captives were set free, until he has spoken, Lealliwhah would die."

"Say that name again," cried Harris.

"Lealliwhah!" repeated the girl, with a half gratified smile at his eagerness.

"Whatever may happen—thank you, Lealliwhah. You have lifted a load from my heart. If I live, I hope to reward you—if I die, Heaven bless you!"

The girl moved slowly away, and repeated herself on the log. Her quick ear had caught the sound of the returning warriors.

They came back slowly and deliberately, seating themselves in a half-circle round the prisoners. Telonga's face, despite his stoicism, was flushed with passion, though not a muscle of his countenance spoke. He had seen the interview between the girl and the prisoners. His pride would not allow him to interrupt it; but of a fierce and jealous disposition, he had endured tortures which made him anxious to have the discussion rapidly over. Now, however, he grew gradually calm.

Telonga was aware that his great physical strength, his bravery, his powers of endurance, his terrible success in many conflicts with the whites, and his wonderful swiftness of foot, far superior as they were to any of his tribe, were his only pretensions to command. His ferocity, his pride, his contemptuous treatment of other warriors, militated much against him, while the fierce jealousy which prompted him to be followed on the war-path by his destined bride would have caused rebellion against his authority, except that his personal prowess was feared; while the younger warriors were on his side.

The Indians sat smoking for half an hour, then they rose, and to the utter astonishment of the prisoners unbound them and bade them walk together; and without further words entered the leafy arches of the forest. The prisoners were quite free, though their blood being stagnant enough to make them walk slowly, the Indians occasionally cuffed and kicked them, which Harris, in obedience to a whisper from Boone, took in good part.

"What means this?" said Harris, while they stood a little apart from the red-skins at a favorite spring, where the Indians were drinking; "have they any intention of showing us mercy?"

"Well," replied Boone, slowly, "if they'd have killed us there, we should have been brained and scalped right off. As we're going up to their villages, we shall be roasted alive!"

CHAPTER IX.

ON PAROLE.

It may readily be imagined that Edward Harris did not hear the fearful announcement without a shudder. He knew too well the terrible hatred borne by the Indians to the whites, he had heard too much of cruelties practiced by them upon unfortunate captives—cruelties so awful as not to bear repetition—not to be prepared for any cruelties which could be imagined by men whose creed was war—whose soul's desire was glory—whose insignia of pride and honor were the bleeding scalps of men, women, and children.

The war between the white men and the red-skins was in those days one of extermination and hate. On

the border every night, the sky was illumined by the flames of cabins, while the air resounded with the shrieks of helpless victims. There was very little quarter given on either side. The Indians, when they attacked a village or block-house, if successful, scalped the men, old women, and children; carrying off the girls and youthful matrons, and perhaps one or two male prisoners, who were saved for the torture.

The conduct of the whites was not calculated to put an end to this state of things. They retaliated on the red-skins with fearful severity. In the disturbed districts, the sight of a tawny limb was sure to bring a bullet. It was war to the knife.

Ned Harris knew this quite as well as Daniel Boone. He was young in forest life, but he resolved to imitate, as much as possible, the composure of his companion. He no more wished to die than does any man who is not either insane or very wicked, but he resolved that death should not make him exhibit any unmanly terrors, or awake in him any signs of weakness.

The history of border warfare is but one story of heroism and self-denial. A library might be made of the stories of men who founded the Great Republic.

The captives were carefully bound at night, but not in such a way as to hurt them, or check the circulation of their blood, but simply to impede their escape. But from the day on which they were unbound from the tree, they saw no more of the young Indian girl in whom they both felt so deep an interest.

Telonga was one of those men whose soul is given to an idea. He loved Lealliwhah with an intensity of passion of which he was ashamed. He was, therefore, anxious to conceal it as much as possible. The presence of the girl in the same camp with Harris would have been too much for his stoicism. But she was not very far off, as Boone often called attention to the distant trot of her pony in the woods, indicating that she merely kept out of sight from prudential reasons.

Telonga had selected the rifle of the great hunter as his own, while a second brave had taken the handsomer but less serviceable one of Ned Harris as his prize. Both the white men looked with anxious eyes, lest they should be spoiled, for they had not yet lost all hope of escape. The Indians were returning to their home by a devious route, part of which was quite arid, both water and game being scarce, and they could not tell what extraordinary chances might be thrown in their way.

They now seemed anxious to advance, but having devoured every article of food on the preceding night, were evidently on the lookout for game. Still none appeared—not a wild turkey or deer, while not a buffalo was to be seen. The Indians became thoughtful, and at last a halt was declared, when it was resolved to scour the neighborhood, and not advance any further until game was provided in sufficient abundance.

At this moment Daniel Boone and Harris stood apart under a tree, watching their captors, the latter with a careless and indifferent, the former with a keen and watchful eye. The chief Telonga, or, the Great Elk, accidentally caught the expression of the hunter's face.

The eagle-eye of the Great Elk was fixed upon Boone with a mixture of hate, curiosity, and admiration. All his hate for the whites was in his glance, and yet there was a mysterious anxiety in the chief's manner which Boone could not understand. The mutual glance was instantaneous, and then both were as cool, calm, and collected as before.

Then the chief advanced to where the two white hunters stood—in this instance, unbound. He then folded his arms, and paused for a moment, as if he expected

the white man to speak; but the white man made no sign. The Shawnee was compelled to begin.

"My white brother is a good shot with the fire-bow," said the chief, with a haughty nod.

"I tell you what, red-skin," replied Boone, quietly, "I am not a man given to boasting, but if you'll give me my old shooting-iron, and will stand on the top of yonder rock, you'll never see Chillicothe again."

A frown passed over the dusky face of the Indian, but he conquered his emotion.

"If I give my pale-face brother his gun, will he shoot for his red-skin friends?"

And Telonga placed his finger on the other's shoulder as he spoke.

"I will," said Boone, sturdily, advancing to take his rifle, without another word.

He could not repress a sigh of pleasure as he once more grasped the old familiar weapon.

"The sun is high," continued Telonga, quietly; "if my brother is not back when its rays tip yonder pine—"

He did not finish, but pointing with one hand toward Ned Harris, he passed the other significantly round his own head.

"Indian," said Boone, drawing himself up to his full height, which was over six feet, and looking right into the dark orbs of the Shawnee, "I am a man without a cross, who scorns a lie. But as game may be nigh, let your young men follow me—when they hear the rifle crack, let them come. There will be food for the camp."

And he stalked away with as much calmness of manner as if he had been sallying forth from home.

CHAPTER X. DEER-HUNTING.

BOONE had a design when he accepted the task of providing for the Indians. He was aware that they were approaching the confines of the Shawnees' territory, and that they soon would reach the villages, when escape would be all but impossible. Every night he remarked that the Indians relaxed in their vigilance. He, and Ned Harris under his tuition, had manifested so much serenity of mind, had eaten their meals, smoked their pipes, and chatted with their guards so unconcernedly, that the Shawnees appeared to believe them reconciled to their lot, the more that Boone had spoken cheerfully of raising a ransom by means of some of those white traders who were always unmolested by the red-skins.

His object, then, when he gave the significant glance, which the Great Elk so readily interpreted, was to examine the country, and to discover if there were a chance of concealing themselves anywhere, and ultimately of escaping without leaving a trail, such as an Indian could follow.

Daniel was accompanied by two Indians—youths, but of powerful make and good runners. They were, as soon as the hunter reached any ground which suited him, to fall back, nor join him until a shot fired should signal them to advance.

The course pursued by the hunter was up the gully of a mountain torrent, which at that season was dry. The valley was bordered by fir and cotton-trees. In a few minutes, Boone was, to all appearance, alone in the mighty wilderness. There was no path, not the trace of a footstep, not a marked tree to guide him. His heart beat more freely, the blood coursed merrily through his veins; he was once more free, his foot was on his native plains, and his gun was in his hand. But for the situation of Ned Harris, and his own promise to return, he would have been supremely happy.

Suddenly Boone halted. He knew he was near a small lake or pond, in the neighborhood of deer. The water was almost concealed by the pond-lily, upon which whole droves of deer will subsist.

He now used the caution of a superior hunter in approaching his quarry. He already heard a certain stamping in the water, accompanied by a grating sound of teeth tearing the stems, and he knew that the wind being from them to him would not betray his presence. Halting at a tree which was not twenty yards from the lake, he turned quietly around and caught one faint glimpse of the dusky followers in the distance, as they hastily retreated behind some bushes.

The pond extended some considerable distance over the plain, the side near him being only concealed by lilies and grass. On the other side was a dense grove of maples. A fine deer came from cover on the shore, and stooped to drink. At the same moment a volume of smoke, a sharp crack, and a painful cry from the wounded animal proclaimed his victory.

Down went the gun, and ere the startled animal could rise from his knees, and while hundreds and hundreds of wood-ducks rose on the wing, the hunter cut the deer's throat just as the joyous red-skins came bounding up. They were delighted, as with their arrows and even fusils, the slaying of a deer was no certainty.

"That will do for to-day," said Boone, quietly; "if you will take him in, I'll have two more by the time you come back. Don't eat him all, and I say, Indians, when you come back bring me a steak or two. I feel mighty hungry myself."

The young warriors laughed heartily, and then cutting a small pole swung the fat and heavy buck across it, and started on their way while Boone quietly loaded and once more concealed himself, well knowing that one shot would not frighten away the deer from that secluded spot. The sun had now passed the meridian some time. It was hot, and the black fly and musketoes were hovering around. For a few minutes Boone remained perfectly still. But even his keen ear caught no sound. Somewhat curious to know how it was he did not even hear the stamping on the water, or the tearing up of the stems, he slowly raised his head, to bring it down as quickly.

His unerring eye had caught sight of a shining gun-barrel, a pair of gleaming eyes, and a peculiar head-dress of some Indian tribe quite familiar to him, though on the instant he did not recollect where he had seen it before.

CHAPTER XI. MASSAQUOIT.

HERE was a predicament. Not fifteen yards from him was an enemy, and one, too, to be dreaded. Boone knew well that it was a rifle that had gleamed in the sun. But no time was to be lost. Shoot two more deer he meant to, though if this fellow remained near him, how it was to be done was a mystery. As to the return of the Indians, it was not to be expected, for they would certainly not desert the food until they had obtained their share.

Boone had leveled his rifle in the direction of the enemy, and was peering along the barrel while thinking. He caught sight as he did so of a dusky limb, and also of the muzzle of a gun. At the same instant a thought crossed the brain of Boone, a flush passed over the dusky-brown face, and then a smile illumined his hard and weather-beaten countenance.

Concealing himself by a sudden jerk in the bushes, he lost sight of his enemy. As he did so, the cry of a whippoorwill rose in the air, a low, long, prolonged cry, as of a wounded bird. Almost with the rapidity of an echo the cry was answered, and the two men starting to their feet, advanced to meet with the slowly-measured tread of men who valued their dignity.

The stranger was a tall and powerful Indian, with a heavy frame, peculiarly broad-chested, and erect

as the pine of the mountains. His arms and breast were profusely ornamented with painted figures and devices, while the rows of wampum which depended from his neck denoted that he was a chief. His feet and legs were guarded by deerskin buskins; while over his shoulders was cast a blanket partially revealing a tunic of some fibrous material, stained many colors. He had a lofty and noble forehead, with black and piercing eyes. His head was nearly bare except where a tuft of black hair was bound in wampum and surmounted by a bunch of eagle's feathers. The expression of his countenance indicated good nature, courage, and indomitable perseverance.

Not a single quick step did the white or red-skin warrior take until they were close at hand, though each was delighted to see the other.

At last they shook hands, still with the gravity which became men who were past the days of boyish sentiment. And yet the real pleasure they felt gleamed in both their eyes.

"How do, brother Boone?" said the Indian.

"Glad to see you, Massaquoit," replied the great hunter; "what are you doing about here?"

"Scouting," said the Indian, one of the most renowned runners of the well-known Sir William Johnson. "And my brother?"

"Shawnee prisoner," replied Boone, with a smile; "but as I intend to escape this night, do you just get behind me in the bush. We can talk while I shoot."

The Indian nodded his head, took his rifle, and disappeared in the undergrowth, nor did he appear any more during the singular conference.

Boone, who knew the other was close to him, briefly related the circumstances under which he had been captured, and his own views as to an escape. The Indian listened to him without the faintest approach to an interruption, Boone all the while he was talking keeping a steady look-out on the lake, and occasionally pausing to listen for the returning steps of the Indian warriors.

"And now, Massaquoit, are you ready to help an old friend out of a hobble?" he said.

"Massaquoit has lived forty summers and forty winters, and never deserted a friend or spared an enemy. The great hunter is his friend."

"What do you think of the weather?" asked the white man, with a hasty glance at the sky.

"Before the rising of to-morrow's sun, the heavens will crash, the tall pines will be struck by the forked fire, and the earth will drink the tears of the clouds."

"Well, I generally have found you pretty correct," said Boone, whose great reputation in after years was partly due to his powers of observation and partly to his steady determination to learn on all occasions; "but just tote us the signs."

"My brother is a great hunter, and should read the signs for himself," replied the Indian, modestly.

"No, Massaquoit," said Boone, quietly; "I want to be sure. Every thing depends on the weather."

"Does not my brother hear the cries of the tree-frog?—does he not sing merrily to hail the coming storm in which it delights?"

"There's truth in that, old chap," said Boone, grinning; "but I've known that sign to fail, and especially as that noisy brute is generally piping up."

"My brother is very wise," continued Massaquoit, in the same calm voice; "but let him hearken to the loon. Does not that loud clear voice say in words that the heavens will soon pour down their waters on the earth?"

"Well, there's something in that."

"And does not my brother hear the moaning of the thousand leaves and branches. They know

that the storm-cloud is on its way, and they are telling one another. See, too, where, on the water, the fowls are busy flapping their wings and running about as if in alarm. I have spoken."

"And to the purpose," cried Boone, with a smile; "well, I mean to make tracks to-night; so look out. Hist! There he comes—one—two—three!"

As he spoke, a tall buck walked cautiously forth from the forest, and stopped on the edge of the lake; there paused, and looked round, making, as he did so, an odd whistling sound. A couple of does, fat and in good case, then followed, and all three gazed quietly for a moment. Then, as if it had been one shot, both the white man and the Indian fired. The does fell dead, and the buck, with a terrible bound, sprung out into the lake and struck for the opposite side. No time was lost by the hunters in securing their prey, and as neither had any wish for the Shawnees to come up, they each secured their prize; Boone shouldered his and hurried down in the direction of the camp, not at all liking that others should have a chance of discovering the trail of Massaquoit.

About half-way he met the Indians coming along at a loping trot, having satisfied their own appetites. They brought a handful of dried maize and a lump of venison, which Boone took readily, handing over the doe to their charge. In this way, they returned to the camp, where they were well received, though Telonga never unbent from his stoical and cold manner. He hated the whites, and never willingly spared one except for the torture.

With a cold glance of haughty but not pleased approval, he received back the rifle and adjuncts, after which Daniel Boone went and seated himself beside his fellow-captive. The Indians lay about in all directions, while in the distance, under the boughs of a large sycamore tree, could be seen the reclining form of the Indian girl, half-concealed by an arbor of boughs. By a kind of intuition, the prisoners were aware that they were not to look that way, and not once did they offend the keen and subtle jealousy of the wily savage even by a stolen glance.

For some reason or other, the savages seemed to have no intention of moving that day. It appeared that they wished to reach their native village in one more march, and as it was a long one, naturally were glad of a previous rest. And so the sun went down, heavy darkness brooded over the earth, and soon nothing could be seen at a distance of a few yards from the watch-fire round which the Indians sat smoking their pipes after their evening meal.

Except Telonga, who sat apart with all the stern calmness of a great warrior, the dusky braves now unbent, told stories of the chase, of the war-path, and even of love. A low laugh every now and then went round the circle. It is a mistake to suppose that the Indian is always as solemn as he is in the council-chamber, or on state occasions. No one likes more to unbend and cast off that artificial manner which is the result of education, policy, and the peculiar life which they have adopted.

Ned Harris, his eyes fixed upon the ground and rapt in deep thought, sat unbound against a tree. The Indians, in consideration of what had occurred during the day, had not tied up the prisoners. At his side, to all appearance in a deep slumber, was Boone, though a very attentive watcher might have remarked that his ear was to the ground in the act of listening.

"Harris," he whispered, the noisy talk of the Indians rendering his voice inaudible at a slight distance.

"Yes," said the other, with a start, which was almost dangerous, in such a deep reverie was he.

"Don't you do that again," con-

tinued Boone, in the same monotonous tone, "or you'll have the whole gang of red-skins upon us. Just listen, and don't move your hand to the right or left. The eye of the chief is upon you."

Harris gave a yawn, stretched his arms, as an excuse to raise his head, and clearly saw the cold, snake-like glitter of the chief's eyes fixed upon his face.

"I mean to step, and that no sooner than directly," continued Boone, "so keep your eyes skinned and your ears open, and do as I do."

Boone had heard as he lay on the ground the low rumbling of the coming storm, and his experience told him it would be a terrible one. In no part of the world does the hurricane bear down with more force, or the thunder-crash with more fearful violence, than on the continent of North America, particularly as you advance into the interior. Yes; there came borne along the ground the first boom of the advancing thunder, which a minute or two later caught the ears of the savages.

All were silent. Brave before an enemy, with no fear in the trackless forest, the dusky red-skin yet dreads the storm, which, to him, seems the spoken wrath of the Manitou. On! on! it came with terrible speed. First there was a tremulous motion of the trees; then a heavy pattering on the millions of leaves of the forest announced the rain, while crack after crack of thunder awoke the slumbering echoes of hill and valley, and constant reverberating shocks filled the air.

The lightning was intensely vivid; and the savages, quite awed for a moment, bent their heads between their knees and listened. It appeared as if the very sluices of the heavens were opened, so heavy was the rain, which put out the fire in a moment. Still, by the vivid flashes of the lightning, the warriors might be seen motionless as statues, heedless of the swaying of the trees above, and of the heavy falls of timber which every now and then could be heard in the forest.

Suddenly Ned Harris felt Boone move, and turning his head almost imperceptibly, saw that his place was empty. He was about to follow when a flash of lightning revealed that Telonga had risen, Harris shuddered. To be found escaping was death. The warrior's eyes were turned straight in his direction, but next minute he moved round and walked slowly toward the hut where the Indian girl was concealed.

Then Harris moved on his hands and knees round the tree. Once behind it, he rose to his feet. The tall form of Daniel Boone stood erect beside him. Without a word, he handed him his rifle, and then led the way under the leafy arches of the forest in the direction of home. The thunder, lightning, and rain, still continued, and as Boone led the way across the open prairie in the direction of the lake, it appeared perfectly appalling.

"But it's nearly over," said Boone, grimly; "and as soon as it is, we may look for fighting. These devils will not give us up, and our tracks are like cart-wheels."

"What is to be done?" replied Harris.

"Pretty much nothing," continued Boone, "but go ahead. Stop a bit—I've got to introduce you to a valued friend. There he stands;" and he pointed to something dark at the foot of a pine, at no great distance, at the same moment giving utterance to the long, low, melancholy cry of the whippoorwill.

"Who, in the name of heaven, can it be?" said Harris, as the cry was repeated.

"A friend—show no surprise," and next minute the three were beneath the pine-tree, where Massaquoit received them with the lofty air of a warrior, who stood upon his own territory. Harris looked at him with admiration, as the clouds breaking, and the

moon bursting forth through the tree-tops, revealed his noble and manly beauty.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PURSUIT.

A LOUD cry—that of rage, fury, and surprise—now rent the air from the direction of the camp, proclaiming that the flight of the pale-faces had been discovered. Both shuddered. They knew the awful passions which must rage within those dusky bosoms at being thus outwitted, after bringing their captives to the very gates of their village. No glorious reception, no admiring glances of the young squaws—no war or scalp-dance for them—no exquisite enjoyment of torture at the stake.

"We're bound not to be taken again," said Boone, gravely; "better a bloody grave in the wilds of Kentucky than be roasted to death in Chillicothe."

"I say the same—but what is to be done?" and Harris turned involuntarily toward the Indian, who stood in an attitude of deep and intense attention—a figure carved from stone.

"Ugh!" he said, pointing toward that part of the forest where was the Indian camp.

A number of lights could there be seen flickering in the woods for a moment, and then were held on high until they seemed to merge into one.

"Load!" whispered Boone, setting the example and thrusting down his ramrod with the determined air of a man who means to fight to the last gasp for his life and liberty.

Ned Harris imitated his example, examined his priming with scrupulous care, pricking the touch-hole, and, in fact, forgetting none of those precautions, the omission of which has cost so many brave men their lives.

"Fire once," said Massaquoit; "then follow."

It was a strange scene. The storm had swept past after spending its fury; but in its train began to gather once more those black and heavy clouds which the north wind hurries on, charged with electricity, and showers that periodically drench the plains of the western wilderness. It was again dark. All was as still and silent as death, except where the sighing of the wind rippling over the tree-tops made sad and solemn music. Once now and then a faint moon struggled through the clouds; but, in general, the trees and valley were like a solid mass of blackness.

Then a kind of dancing light flickered like a star near the ground, and they saw that the Indians were following the trail by torchlight. In their blind fury at having been outwitted by two white men, who not only escaped, but coolly took their guns from the pile of weapons, they did not use as much precaution as usual, but pointed out the conspicuous trail with keen satisfaction. They were also loud in their threats of vengeance.

Soon they were near, and the fugitives saw that at least a dozen Indians were on the trail. Only one or two were armed with muskets; while the others had arrows ready fitted to their bent bows.

"Fire!—all—same," whispered Massaquoit.

All did so. The torch fell—a loud cry rent the air, and then all was still. But the fugitives did not pause to reload. They did not run. This would have been wholly in contradiction to the tactics of the red-skin scout, who moved, however, up the gully which Boone had followed on the previous day, with a slow and stealthy step, which left not the faintest sound.

Each man loaded as he went, while not a word was spoken until they reached the lake, where under a tree hung the doe, neatly cut up into joints, which were hastily divided between them. Then again

they advanced, skirting the water, without the slightest effort to conceal their trail—a circumstance which, though it surprised Ned Harris, in no way astonished Boone. He was accustomed to the eccentricities of the scout—one of the most expert who ever fought or ranged for the colonists during the great war with the French.

At length they came to a stream that supplied the lake, and which was not only shallow, but filled by stones, bowlders, and rocks. Into this Massaquoit plunged up to his waist.

"Tread close behind," said Boone, after a whispered hint from the Indian, "the river's full of holes. He knows the stepping-stones. It would be death to make a mistake."

Ned Harris required no second hint. They were marching in Indian file, Massaquoit as leader, Boone behind him, and the young hunter last. All went slowly, as the current was swift and strong; at length they entered a narrow gap, between rocks, where it required their utmost strength to contend against the current. Then they were in smooth water which spread out on all sides into a kind of pond, with high and precipitous banks.

"Why!" cried Boone; "I've heard tell of this. It's Dick's Hole."

Massaquoit nodded, and turning to the right, stood next minute on a ledge of rock which admitted them to a view of a cavern of moderate dimensions. The Indian stooped, blew up some embers, lit a pine torch, and welcomed his white brothers to his *caché*, as all the places where trappers, hunters, and others have their riches, are called. Massaquoit's cavern was well stored with peltries, tied up in small packets for removal though how one man could hope to take away so much wealth seemed a puzzling question.

But the hunters were too much gentlemen of the forest to ask questions or show curiosity. Massaquoit himself sat down, handed a bottle of whisky to Boone, who passed it round, and most welcome was it after their wetting; and then began to smoke in perfect silence for some time. He then lay down in a corner, drew his blanket round him, and in a few minutes was asleep, as if no danger from pursuers existed—as if there were not an enemy raging for their blood within perhaps a quarter of a mile.

"Do you feel sleepy?" asked Boone.

"No," replied Harris, thoughtfully, "I do not feel sleepy. The excitement of our unlooked-for escape has driven all slumber from my eyes. I will watch while you rest."

"Young man," said Boone, solemnly, "you're young in forest signs. You do not know all the notes of warning which time that touches the hair with white gives to the practiced hunter. 'Tis hard to tell what may happen. The Shawnee may be now peering into the mouth of our cave. It would be a fine disgrace if Daniel Boone were to sleep while watching were needful. We can talk—where I sit not a speck can turn the corner of the rock without my beading him. Keep out of the glittering of the light, but keep your rifle handy; we may want them at a minute's notice."

Ned Harris did as he was told. "So," said Daniel Boone, after a brief silence, "you came out of the settlements to see what life in the forest was. By this time I suppose you know how you like it."

"Pretty well," replied Harris, quietly; "the excitement is pleasant; the mighty forests, the grand prairies, and the splendid rivers move my soul; but that is not, Daniel Boone, why I am here."

"Why, then?" said the hunter, who did not affect not to be curious.

"Duty. We may have some hours to pass here, and if you like you shall hear the story of my life,

or rather the narrative of those events which have brought me a wanderer to the plains, prairies, and forests of beautiful Kentucky, and why I intend being a greater wanderer still."

"Where on earth, young man, do you mean to go next?" asked Boone.

"I know not where it is; but if I can make up a party I shall visit the Valley of Cedars; if no one else will join, I will go alone."

"Alone!" cried Boone, with an astonished smile; "why, that's right in the heart of the Indian country, where no white man ever was, and where no white man ever will be—down in the land of the setting sun."

"I mean to go," said Ned Harris, quietly, without any of that boastful tone which some men assume when they make a rash assertion. "I mean to go, and as soon, too, as I have made my preparations. It may be a perilous journey—I may die in the attempt; but, at least, I shall have done my duty."

"Well, you've got to find out where it is first," said Boone; "I am sure I ain't going to help you in such madness. What for?"

"What for?" said Ned Harris, sadly; "what for? You shall know—but hush!"

Dead silence prevailed. Boone touched the scout with his foot, and at the same time extinguished the torch. All was black darkness within, while without there was a grayish light, which admitted of objects being clearly discerned. Harris, while Boone was looking into his excited face, had discovered the presence of half-a-dozen Indians wading in the water.

They were soon joined by others to the number of twenty, who all gazed with curiosity and some awe at the scene before them. Then they began a circuit of the pool, searching every where for signs of the fugitives. In vain; they could discover nothing, and just as day dawned they determined to descend the stream, when the quick eye of an Indian saw the entrance to the cave. To crawl to the rock, to stand close against it, to peer into the gloom, was the work of an instant. He then entered boldly, and summoned his companions. A light was struck, and all saw that the cave had been recently occupied.

It was now empty.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN EARLY SETTLEMENT.

THE sun rose warm and glad on the banks of the blue Alleghany, upon a scene as hopeful and inspiring as ever was presented to man in a new, freshly-explored country. The birds sang glad and blithesome on the topmost boughs, the sun showed its huge red face over the distant eastern hills, the air moaned in the tall trees; and it was a bright and glorious morning.

The spot to which we now transport the reader had not been long settled, but it already began to assume all the signs of prosperity and civilization.

For those who judge America by what they now see, a description of such a settlement may not be uninteresting. It is a scattered village in a kind of large open prairie, surrounded on three sides by the forest. The fourth is skirted by the river. Over this beautiful grassy plain are scattered, at no great distance from one another, some dozen cabins or huts, in which the new settlers are content to dwell until means and leisure shall be found to erect more pretentious houses.

At one end of the village is a block-house, two stories in height, the upper story being broader by three feet on each side than the lower; a very common mode of building. This building is made from hewn green logs, well dovetailed together, and will hold, in case of attack, the whole of the inhabitants of the village, and their principal valuables—a primitive,

yet efficient defense, much used on the border.

Around the block-house, at the distance of some feet, is a substantial wall of palisades, good thick trees, which protrude twelve feet from the earth, and are braced together by cross-bars and iron clamps. Outside this was a ditch.

This fort has never yet been used except as a school-house and chapel, for the hostile Indians have not shown themselves near that settlement since its establishment by one James Harris, about eight years previously. This man, an Englishman of considerable means, had selected this spot, cleared the land, and built himself a house some ten years previously. A very large tract of territory belonged to him, which he was gradually bringing into cultivation, both personally and by letting portions on lease to such newcomers as he wished to have for neighbors.

When he settled on the Alleghany, he was accompanied by his wife, a younger sister, and several laborers and women. It was said that he had left England from some political motive; but, however this might be, a more resolute, firm, and earnest man never began to recover a wild tract of land from the savage and the wild beasts.

After a time, several families began to collect around him, and then it was the block-house was built, as a matter of precaution against the savage, who, though he had ceded this country by treaty, was sufficiently treacherous to endeavor to win it back by force. Many and fearful rumors reached the settlers of bloody massacres in various parts of the land, many of which might have been avoided by the exercise of common prudence.

In all the early wars the whites were quite as much to blame as the savage races, which originally owned the soil. Fully aware that they had ceded their lands either for a song or to gentle violence, the whites should have been more forbearing. But their policy was to get the several tribes together by the ears, as well as to lose no opportunity of destroying individuals on the most futile of pretenses.

Presently there came to Harrisville a tall, handsome fellow of about three and twenty, whose courage, strength, and perseverance seemed to fit him above all things for a backwoodsman. This man had bought a few hundred acres along a valley of a stream that came down from the hills; and he at once built himself a log-hut of considerable dimensions, which was visible from the block-house, and then set to work to clear himself a garden, a corn-field, and a potato-patch. No idler was John Harding, but a right-down earnest man, who, though not without dollars, was determined to carve his own way in the world by sheer hard work.

He was one of nature's gentlemen. Having received a tolerable education, he had been intended for the profession of the law, but his heart longed for something active and suited to his physical powers and peculiar characteristics of mind. He did not give up the idea of becoming a pleader in the courts of law, but it should be in a new settlement, where he would first build his own house, shoot his own game, and enjoy life according to his own fancy.

For some little time the people of Harrisville saw little of their new neighbor; but when, after six months' hard work, he had prepared himself a residence, corn-fields, and other necessities, not without the aid of a hard-headed old negro, he at last strode down to the village to call on those who had been for some time curious to know him. As he walked through the cabins, few would have thought that that tall frame, dressed in a green hunting-frock, leggings, and dog-skin cap, though with a spic and span new shirt peering over his collar, was a young lawyer

equally fitted to shine in the courts of Themis and of Nimrod.

Mr. Harris, from his wealth, position, and character, was the first man visited. He lived in what was emphatically called the big house, being, indeed, the only frame-house with half a dozen rooms in all the settlement. Mr. Harris was much struck by the appearance of the huge settler as he accosted him at the gate of his garden, where in reality he had gone out to meet him.

"Mornin', judge," said John Harding, who, since he had left college, adopted the quaint mode of speaking of the backwoods-men.

"Good-morning," replied Harris, with a smile; "you have been a long time finding us out."

"Well," said John, in a dreamy kind of way, "there's been a goodish bit to do, you see. I came as soon as I could."

"Walk in, Mr. Harding," continued Harris, who very much liked the look of his new acquaintance; "we're just going to dinner. Mrs. Harris will be most happy to see you."

Harding followed. It was quite clear he was uncomfortable. For six months he had always had either an ax or a rifle in his hands, and now he really did not know where to put the latter.

The inside of the frame-house was neatly furnished, but Harding saw nothing but the ladies. There was Mrs. Harris—with a handsome child of about five years old—to whom Harding bowed with considerable grace, to stand next minute with almost open mouth before Julia, the younger sister of Harris, a laughing, merry, light-hearted, and most fascinating English girl, about eighteen years of age, and who seemed at first singularly out of place in that wild region. But we sometimes little know the latent energy which lives in the bosom of the gentlest of beings, fitting them for any task which shall come home to them as a duty or labor of love.

How Harding ever got through the ceremony of introduction, how he contrived to get rid of his cap, and to sit down by this "splendid critter," as he called her, was more than ever he could say. But he did, and before ten minutes were over was chatting with her as freely as if they had been friends for years. Harris drew his neighbor out, especially as he at once saw that he had been struck by the beauty, innocence, and grace of his young sister. He found at once that Harding was by birth and education a gentleman, though his animal spirits had driven him to take such a novel step as to abandon the delights of civilization for the hardships of the backwoods.

Harding was in no hurry to leave, and so remained quite till sunset, after exacting a promise that they would visit him on the following Saturday, and see his clearing and his maple-sugar.

"How do you like him?" said Harris, to his sister, with a sly sidelong glance at his wife.

"What, the great grizzly bear?"

"I mean that honest, noble-hearted fellow, Harding," observed Harris, quietly.

"Well—for an American savage, he's about the least disagreeable I know."

"How should you like the grizzly bear, or the American savage, for a husband?" slyly rejoined Harris.

"Brother!" cried Julia, with eyes that flashed like diamonds, between indignation and a desire to laugh, "how can you talk such nonsense?"

"He'll propose next Saturday," said Harris, quietly, "as sure as you stand there."

"Will he?—I should like to see him!"

"He's one of the finest fellows I ever met."

"Six feet two of muscle and bone," said Julia Harris, pouting.

"I mean morally as well as physically. It's clear to me that he's what we colonists call 'real grit!'"

"A very good recommendation for stone," said Julia, pettishly; "but not for a husband."

"I hope you may never get a worse," replied Harris, in quite a serious tone.

Julia left the room, rather than carry on the discussion on a subject so unpleasant.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOVE-MAKING.

It was a lovely morning when Julia rose to dress herself for the journey to the house of the big backwoodsman. She had tried to get off going, but Harris insisted; and when she found that she must succumb, woman-like, she determined to be revenged, by being coquettish, pretty, and charming as possible, in order just to tease the impudent fellow, who had caused her so much annoyance from her friends.

But, despite all her vagaries, Julia was happy. The morning seemed more beautiful than any she had witnessed before. It was so cool, so clear, so bright, there was such a freshness in all nature. The trees seemed to wear a brighter and greener mantle than before, the very forest-flowers appeared of a richer and warmer hue, while the birds themselves undoubtedly sang more joyously. There was the sun gilding the tops of the distant mountains, while in the valleys the grayness of twilight still lingered.

Julia, despite all her efforts to appear offended, could but be influenced by the light of love.

No woman is ever offended because a man loves her, even when she herself has no intention of responding to his wishes. Julia had no faint glimpse of the possibility of marrying John Harding; of course not. It was the very last thing she would think of.

John had made Harris declare the day a holiday. It was Monday when he called to see them, and he had spent the whole of the interval in preparing. He had sent down to the settlements for different articles of furniture, for certain ornaments not usually found in the habitations of the hardy early settlers. He had also procured some Old World dainties, so that the breakfast-table was really surprisingly elegant in appearance.

John Harding came out. The first thing he saw was Julia on her pony, in a straw hat with crimson ribbon, a light summer dress, and such pretty shoes, that showed the daintiest ankle in the world. Julia meant to be coldly polite; but what is the use of making resolves with a good-hearted man like John Harding? He took her up off the horse—he could have lifted both—and carried her into the house. Harris and his wife had the grace not to laugh, not even to appear to notice the matter, which saved John Harding. Julia did glance quickly at them, and seeing them demurely shaking hands, in her great generosity of heart, determined to forgive the monster.

They breakfasted, and then John Harding began showing them over his farm. There were men at work at a barn, outhouses, a dairy, and other things quite new in those parts.

"My goodness!" cried Mrs. Harris, in genuine and unfeigned astonishment, "how do you mean to carry all this on?"

"How so, ma'am?"

"You—a single man, impossible! We must find you a wife," she replied.

John Harding colored up to the very roots of his hair, while Julia, with a dark frown, turned to look down the valley.

"You have a first-rate place here," observed Harris, "and when we get more settled your estate will be 'quite' valuable."

"Hope so," said John Harding; "and now, Miss Harris," he continued, taking her hand and placing it within his arm without cere-

mony, "I want to show you something."

And before she could make the slightest resistance, he had led her to a grove of mulberry trees, whence the station could be seen, even the very doors of her brother's house be distinguished.

"It ain't far—and you can always see them," he began, looking up at a bird that was sailing by with a slow sweep of wing.

Julia looked puzzled.

"Now, miss, it's of no use my beating about the bush. I can't do it. I've got a nice farm here, I've got every comfort; but I'm lonely as a bear that's lost her cubs. I've been thinking what it was I wanted, and I've found it out."

"Have you?" said Julia, who was—all young ladies will understand—in a terrible flutter.

"I have," he replied; "I want some one to take it all, myself included."

"Want to sell your farm?"

"No, I want to give it."

"Give it?" cried Julia.

"Yes, miss, to you—farm, master, and all. Now don't speak in a hurry, miss. I'm a rude, plain man—a rough, and, perhaps, coarse man; but my whole future life—my very existence and happiness depends on the next few minutes, miss. You may laugh at me—he took her hand in his—"you may coolly reject me; but, in pity, do not. If you think you ever could like me—if you think that my devotion, the humble devotion of a man to an angel, might make you just like me some day, say so, and I will hope, I will wait; but say no, I leave this place forever. I will go into the woods, and make the arrow of the skulking savage soon take from me that life which will be a burden. Julia Harris, I love you, I can't live without you, and I won't!"

She could not speak. The suddenness of the address, the deep, earnest tones, the absence of any thing but the welling tenderness of a great heart, that felt and could scarcely express its feelings, utterly confounded and astonished her.

"Have I offended you?" he said, sadly.

"No—offended," she began, turning full upon him her eyes sparkling with tears—she saw the deep love-light in his eye; "but—"

There was a look of cold disappointment as he heard the word "but," which smote to his heart.

"Mr. Harding," she said, looking down upon the ground, "this is very sudden, very unexpected, very strange. I will not, however, say that I am not flattered. It is not the custom in the old country to decide as quickly in matters affecting a lifetime; but—but—but—if my esteem—in short, if you will believe me—that—that I will try to make you happy—well—"

"Hurrah!" shouted John Harding, utterly unable to contain himself, and before the astonished girl knew what he was going to do, he caught her up, kissed her, and half-fainting, blushing, struggling, carried her to where Mr. and Mrs. Harris stood admiring the prospect.

"She's mine—she's agreed!" he said.

"Put me down," cried Julia, "I won't be treated like a child. After this conduct, I won't have any thing more to say to you."

Looking intensely miserable, John Harding set her down beside her brother.

"I couldn't help it—I was so happy."

"What is the meaning?" said Harris. "Surely it is not possible that my sister—"

"Has," cried Julia, with a beseeching look at her brother, "agreed to become Mrs. John Harding."

"I am proud and glad to hear it," cried the Englishman, shaking hands with the gigantic hunter.

Never was a courtship shorter or more satisfactory. Julia teased her lover almost to death, but he bore it manfully, and well was he rewarded: for once they were mar-

ried, a better, more devoted, earnest, and good little wife no man ever had. The giant was a mere cipher in her hand, but she never availed herself of her power. She loved him with her whole soul, and had but one desire in the world—to make him happy.

Then, to complete their joy, there was born unto them a daughter, whose name was Constance.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WARNING.

NEVER had there been a happier, a more fortunate marriage, than that contracted, under such singular circumstances, between the huge colonist and the beautiful girl from the great island beyond the sea, to which most of the residents of America still looked with the tender affection of a child for a dearly loved mother.

The settlement had increased in numbers and wealth; the whole neighborhood was as one garden, while the hill estate of the judge's brother-in-law had progressed with a rapidity which displayed the intense energy of the man's character. His house was now elegant and spacious, numerous farm-buildings were erected at a small distance, while a very large portion was under cultivation.

They were one and all prosperous and happy.

The settled parts at this time were very little annoyed by the Indians. They had retreated to their native wilds and forests, nor did they visit the villages, except in search of powder, shot, and other articles, while they traded for beavers and other products of the chase.

Harrisville was more than usually free from Indian visits, being out of the way and solely inhabited by the owners of the soil, their dependents, and one or two scouts and hunters who supplied the settlement with game.

It was morning; the sun was glorious and warm as it tipped the summit of the hills with gold. A sturdy horse and a little pony are held at the entrance of the judge's garden, and in a few minutes he comes forth, attended by a youth of twelve, his son and only child; they mount, and at once falling into an easy trot, start on their usual morning ride to the Hill Farm, as the residence of Harding is called.

The way is pleasant. A rude but well-beaten path leads them through waving corn-fields, green hedges, and inclosed fields, giving everywhere evidence of wealth and prosperity. The wilderness everywhere retreated before the enterprise and energy of civilized man, while even the forest is open and clear in hundreds of places where wood has been cut down for fuel and other uses.

At the door of the house, standing on the steps beneath a portico shaded by honeysuckle and vines, is a lady, with a child holding her by the hand. This child is seven years of age. She has golden hair, a fair complexion, merry laughing eyes, and every sign of being one day a beautiful and charming woman.

Mrs. Harding received them with her usual frank and joyous manner, rejoicing as she always did in the intense friendship which existed between those two children. It was indeed pleasant to behold the little girl, so frail, so fair, leaning for protection and support on the tall, slim youth, who executed her slightest wish, and whose greatest pleasure was to be tyrannized over by her.

"John's taken his gun and gone out shooting," said the happy little woman, as she welcomed her brother; "come in, I shan't wait breakfast for him. There's no knowing, when he gets tramping in the woods, when he will be back."

Mr. Harris smiled, and being quite ready for his breakfast, entered the house, and sat down to the grateful morning meal which

none but those who rise with the day, and go forth in search of genuine appetite and health, really enjoy. About an hour later, the tall hunter came stalking in, his eyes beaming with delight as he saw around his table so many that were dear to him.

He had shot a deer, and brought it home whole upon his stalwart shoulders.

"I tell you what it is, judge, we must restrain so much indiscriminate shooting. Game is getting scarce. I only saw this one down by the black pool to-day; two years ago you might have counted them by the dozens."

"All your own fault, John," said his wife, merrily; "it's that dreadful long rifle of yours."

John Harding laughed in a pleased kind of way, though he shook his head, and was about to make some merry answer, when a shadow fell across the open doorway of the breakfast-room—and a shadow, he knew not why, fell upon his heart.

An Indian, young, but powerful in the extreme, tall and well made, with but little dress to cover him, stood in the doorway.

"Massaquoit!" cried the judge, rising, "why, what is the matter?"

He knew the celebrated runner, a faithful and devoted friend of the whites, from boyhood.

"Let my pale-face brothers look to themselves—the Shawnees have dug up the hatchet—Elenepico is in the woods with a thousand warriors—some bad white men have killed his family—the sky is red with the blaze of burning houses."

John's wife turned deadly pale, and catching her child frantically to her bosom, almost sobbed aloud.

"The great dread of my soul has come at last," she said; "I have always feared this."

"Indian!" cried John, fiercely, "I don't believe a word of it. The red-skins must know the power of the white man, and surely they will not provoke us."

"The Indian is brave. He knows that the pale-face is a great warrior; but his knife has grown rusty, there are no scalps in his wigwag, and his women laugh and tell him he is a squaw."

"That will do," said John Harding.

"Brother," put in Harris, quietly, "this man is faithful and true. The best thing will be to take the women and children into the old block, and then scour the woods for signs. If the bloody heathens are bent on war, we must fight. If any one has indeed slain the chief's family, it is a sad affair. The passions of the tribes will be roused, and we shall see dreadful things."

"Perhaps," said John Harding; "but as I don't happen to care a hickory stump for a hundred of the red-skins, I shall not desert the home which is all I have in the world. If they come here, they'll wish they hadn't; that's all."

The little noble-hearted wife said nothing. She knew her husband well, and firmly intended that, come what might, they would sleep in the block that night, but she did not like to show her unlimited influence over him before either her brother or the Indian, whom she allowed to depart after a few words of conference.

Mr. Harris had many connections in other stations as well as in some of the forts, and he had already heard rumors that the Indians were preparing for the war-path. They had, indeed, given in some places alarming signs of their presence; the woods were alive with them, and now and then a treacherous shot from the deep forest would strike down a laborer in the field; while a hunter would leave his home at morn, to be heard of no more until his mangled and gory body was discovered in some secluded forest nook.

They had heard, too, of flat-boats being waylaid and their inmates massacred, but hitherto the young settlement had been wholly free from any attack or outrage.

CHAPTER XVI.

WARS AND RUMORS OF.

THE news spread like wildfire through the scattered houses, that an Indian runner had brought alarming news to the frontier fort, and ere an hour had passed the whole of the men capable of bearing arms had congregated around their respected magistrate and commandant. There was but one opinion. The women and valuables should be removed to the block-house, and a party of men sufficient to hold out against the Indians should be left to garrison it, while thirty stout hunters and backwoodsmen should scour the woods under the guidance of Massaquoit, and discover what might be the intention of the Indians.

All knew that if the Shawnees were up, they might expect a long and bloody war. These savages were always the determined enemies of the whites. They were known to be a vindictive, revengeful and reckless people, delighting in war, and their very name was a word of terror and execration for many a long year to the settlers in Kentucky and on the banks of the Ohio.

This plan having been decided on, a youth was sent up to Hill Farm, which proved to be amply guarded against surprise, John having called in his men and set them on the walls, well armed and ammunitioned. They were, however, all field-hands, utterly without experience in Indian trickery and treachery. He returned word that he should, if necessary, join the forces in the block in the course of the day.

And thus the hours passed, until the evening, without evidence of any intention to attack the place. The forest was still and silent, though between its leafy arches a thousand painted savages, might be lurking, to waylay and destroy.

Since the time when we first introduced Harris to our readers, the population of the settlement having much increased, the block-house had been much enlarged. It was two stories high, the upper projecting over the lower as before. The roof was steeply shelving with planks, so smoothly shaven that the most agile savage would have failed to hold a position on them; though the dry shingles were fearfully combustible.

On the side of the river, and on the side of the forest was a projection for the sentries, and here at nightfall sat Mr. Harris, peering eagerly into the darkness. The day had been very warm, the night was deliciously cool, even necessitating a blanket round his shoulders. There was a moon in the heavens, but it was half concealed by a haze, while fleecy clouds drifted slowly past, making dark shadows on the ground. And still no sign.

Once or twice Mr. Harris thought he saw dusky forms gliding along the skirt of the forest while the moon was hid, but could not be sure. The substantial wall of the palisades was, however, so far distant from the nearest trees, that had a large body of the enemy rushed forth from any part, they could not have reached the ditch without being discovered and shot down.

Thus the weary hours passed. The women and children were in the chamber below, or in some large outhouses attached to the block. Weary and exhausted with the day's work and excitement, they slept. Not so with the men. Through every loop-hole in the block streamed a flickering light, while loud laughter and cries indicated that the backwoodsmen were awake, and treating the threatened danger with their usual coolness and indifference.

Mr. Harris was too interested in coming events, too deeply anxious for the return of the scouts to wish for rest. He had therefore volunteered to remain sentinel all night. Slowly the hours passed, and by the very chill in the air he knew that the dawn was at hand.

He stood in the black shadow of the wall above him, and scanned the horizon. With a groan of anguish he almost fell off the perch on which he stood.

The Hill Farm-house was on fire, and by the lurid light of the crackling flames he could see that round it the red-skins danced in terrible and fearful glee. Mr. Harris had a night-glass, which enabled him to verify his suspicions more thoroughly.

"Stand to your guns," he shouted; "the heathen is upon us."

The men rushed wildly to loop-hole and roof, to gaze with awe at this terrible evidence that war, with its red hand, had entered their peaceful valley. At the same moment, out from the forest came pouring a flood of Indian warriors, who with shouts and yells—their hideous war-cry—came rushing toward the fort, firing at every loop-hole and crevice, and shooting arrows, like falling stars in the murky night, tipped with burning tow.

But the men in the fort took such deadly and steady aim, that the savages were glad to retreat behind stumps and trees, and behind a bank which unfortunately rose no more than forty yards distant, and which skirted the edge of a small lake. According to their universal habit when thus repulsed, there was a dead silence, and in five minutes from the first attack not an Indian warrior was to be seen.

But there was not one man within those walls who did not know what this portended. A regular siege on the part of the Indians, who would reduce and weary them by continual, sudden, and harassing attacks, until exhausted, weary, ill, and fainting, they would yield to some last desperate attack, or surrender at discretion. From the opening in the roof, carefully protected by bullet-proof planks, two men came to watch.

One of these was Harris, whose eye was fixed all the time on the terrible beacon-fire on the hill.

And now up into a watery sky came bursting the first faint streak of dawn, silencing clouds and tree-tops with a frail, cold loveliness which was very beautiful. First only the hill-tops were tipped with light, then the tall and waving boughs, then the top of here and there a scattered house, until suddenly up shot a golden ladder of light, within its trembling blaze other orbs of milder light, until all nature was of a shining yellow; the pale stars faded, the edge of the clouds were tipped with flecks of light, and from tree and every bough burst forth the chorus of morn.

But scarce an eye was directed to admire nature and its beauties. All were either gazing with deep anxiety at the Hill Farm, or watching the skirt of the forest. Suddenly, with a terrific shout, the Indians rose and commenced a terrible and deadly fire on the block-house. For some minutes it was so unrelenting as to take the garrison by surprise, but soon the coolness of brave and practiced woodsmen prevailed, and the savages received back a volley that sent them howling to cover.

But the roof of the block-house was on fire. A number of arrows dipped in burning tow had, in the confusion, been shot at the roof. The dry shingles in a moment were in flames.

Coolly, and with that calm determination which is ready for any emergency, Mr. Harris seized the numerous buckets provided for this contingency, and soon dashed out the flames. Every eye was now fixed upon the bank which concealed the Indians, every rifle was ready to shoot at the first who should have the audacity to show themselves, especially those who should again attempt to shoot their burning arrows at the tower.

Then Harris once more turned his glance toward the hill, and saw that which froze his blood, and lifted his hair with intensity of horror. Down the hill-side, pursued by twenty painted warriors,

or rather fiends, came rushing a form he knew full well.

It was John Harding running for his life, his wife in his arms. They had burnt him out of that home once so happy, they had driven him forth a wanderer, but with all that he cared for still in his possession. Close behind the stalwart settler, holding fast to the skirts of his hunting dress, came another figure, lighter and smaller, which, as the group neared the fort, seemed to be that of Chloe, the negro nurse who had taken charge of Constance from her birth. The child was in her arms.

Harris frantically bade the men keep the Indians at work, while he, with two determined hands, descended toward the gate to let his brother-in-law in. This was a work of danger and difficulty, as the Indians commanded from the high bank every part of the interior of the stockade.

Bending on his hands and knees, in this imitated by his companions, the brave judge, clutching his knife and pistols, while a tomahawk was fixed in his belt, crawled toward the door. At that minute another volley from both sides, another cry of fire, another emptying of buckets on the blazing shingles, made so much confusion, that the gate leading within the stockade was reached. It was fastened by two large bolts and a heavy bar. The former were at once drawn, while one of the men stood by to lift the bar.

Harris peered through a small chink in the rough wooden gate, and saw his brother-in-law coming on at a tremendous pace. His head was bare, his hair flew wildly in the wind, his face was deadly pale, while his teeth were set with that air of fierce determination which was such a marked part of his character.

The burden he bore seemed to him as nothing. In his great love he cared not if beggary were his, so that they were saved.

Oh, that awful shout! The Indians on the skirt of the forest have seen the fugitives, and a dozen grim warriors come dashing forward to cut off their retreat.

"Drive back the bloody heathens!" shouts Harris, turning to the block, as, regardless of all consequences, he casts open the heavy door. "Run, brother, run!" he shrieked, in tones of deep and heartfelt agony.

No need to cry out. The powerful man, in whose arms these burdens seem as feathers, is still coming on at a fearful pace. He seems to fly, so terrific are the bounds he takes along the earth. At this moment two volleys rouse the startled echoes of the forest. The Indians have fired on the little group, while, as soon as they were within range, the backwoodsmen had given them a deadly answer.

When the smoke cleared away, John Harding was seen rising from the ground, and once more tearing along with the speed of a race-horse. Then he enters the stockade, the ponderous door is closed, and he sinks for a moment on the earth, clasping the insensible form of his wife in his powerful arms.

"My God!" he shrieked; "speak, Julia! Have they hurt you? Demons from the lower regions, have they wounded my wife? Speak—speak, I say!"

And he glared at her with an agony of suffering which made every heart ache.

"Brother," said Harris, with forced calmness, "be a man. She will never speak again!"

John spoke not, moved not, stirred not. His fixed, glazed, and, for once, cruel-looking eyes were fixed upon the cold, calm, placid face of his wife; who was dead, stone, stark dead, and yet so beautiful, as, with her flesh still warm, she seemed a mockery of life.

"Where is the child?" suddenly and hoarsely whispered Harris in his ear.

"The child!—what child?" gasped John. "Merciful Father my child gone too?"

And he rose to his feet with a

glance so awful, that the others involuntarily held back. He strode toward the door. All caught him back.

"Are you mad?" said Harris, holding him firmly; "what would you do? The child must be found, but why throw away your life? Let me look forth. Do you stand, men, to your guns."

And he opened the door, glanced to the right and left to see that not an Indian was in sight. Not one was to be seen, even the bodies were removed; while nowhere was there a trace of Chloe, the black nurse, or Constance, the only child of the bereaved father.

Against such terrible trials as these had the early settlers continually to contend. Every hour, similar tragedies were enacted, and the desolate men, thus beggared in heart and hope, went forth to become prowlers of the forest, skulkers on the plain—no longer chasing the deer and snaring the beaver, but hunters of men.

Harris had great difficulty in restraining John Harding from scouting the plain in search of his little daughter. It was useless. The Shawnees had, doubtless, in the ferocity of their hearts, long since brained her.

For John Harding there was no hope in this world any more, except in revenge.

CHAPTER XVII. THE BLOCK-HOUSE.

JOHN HARDING appeared for a few minutes stunned by the fearful nature of the misfortune which had befallen him. He closed his eyes, passed his hand across his brow, opened them again, gazed at his dead wife and then at his friends, after which he burst into loud screams of laughter that was worse than tears.

"Ha! ha! ha! how dared I be happy? What business had I with a wife? Ah, accursed red-skins blaze away! By the heaven above, for every hair of her head, for every drop of her blood, for every pang of that awful flight, shall a scalp fall from you! Give me a gun, that I may be avenged, or my heart will break."

He rose, with the body in his arms, ran across to a shed—a kind of armory—took the now cold corpse within, laid it on a couple of benches, closed the door, locked it, took the key, and then clutching a huge rifle, which was thrust into his hand, entered the block. It was time. The Indians, who seemed to increase in numbers every moment, were firing with a rapidity which gave the garrison not a moment of repose. Again and again was the attempt renewed to fire the shingles, and again and again was it foiled by the besieged, until, however, the roof became charred, steamy, and smoking.

John walked through the upper block without a word, and took his station on the sentries' stand outside, where he stood facing the Indians without the slightest shelter. A loud cry, the hellish war-shout, and a dozen muskets fired at him, was the answer to his temerity. But he heeded them not, though his hunting-shirt was cut in various places. Taking steady aim at the dusky form of an Indian, which was incautiously exposed, he fired, and a savage yell proclaimed the deadly result.

And there, from that fearful rising to the equally fearful setting of the sun, he stood, unmoved, silent, without even a drop of water to moisten his parched lips, loading, firing, utterly regardless of all that was taking place around, except when he could slay a red-skin.

The Indians, meanwhile, beginning to suffer from the terrible weapon which, in right hands, they always respected, began rolling logs and stones to the edge of the bank already alluded to, and thus constructed several strong breastworks, from which they

were able to take aim with more deadly effect. Every now and then, while from every place of concealment they could find guns were discharged, a whole flight of arrows, tipped with flaming tow or balls of burning pitch, were discharged upon the roof, to be at once submerged by torrents of water.

The Indians became furious, and in their madness, many came rushing toward the stockade, in the hope of pulling it down or firing it. But these were shot down dead, or driven back limping to their intrenchments. Then suddenly the look-out from above announced that the Indians were digging a trench by which to approach without risk to themselves, but with the certainty of undermining the outer defenses.

Then came a cry from those whose duty it was to keep the roof wet, for more water to be handed up.

There was not a drop left.

The silence of despair, of such despair as shows itself in the resolve to do or die, fell upon the whole party. But they were not men to give way. There was a well within the intrenchments, but it was in an exposed place, and to fetch a bucket thence was to rush to certain death. What, then, was to be done? A variety of suggestions were made, but none feasible.

Meanwhile the firing continued, and on the sentries' platform was heard the quick, sharp, unceasing crack of the deadly rifle, grasped by the widowed and bereaved father—a deadly rifle that sent more souls to Hades than any within the fort.

"There's water everywhere hereabouts," said a stalwart backwoodsman, after a moment; "let's dig a well in the block."

A loud murmur of approval followed the suggestion, and in an instant four men who were used to the spade descended to that part occupied by the trembling women and children, and huddling them up in one corner, began tearing up the boards and digging for their lives—and truly so, for once the block-house really on fire, all hope was gone. They might fight or surrender—death was equally certain whichever course they decided on.

Death for the brave defenders of the innocent, worse for them; and all knew this well.

The skirt of the forest was now alive with Indians, who, though not taking any active part in the attack, were waiting with stoical patience for the time, which appeared nearer and nearer every moment, when they might rush in, flood the fort, and commence the awful work of destruction and desolation.

Still the Indians, having a number of boys and youths loading their pieces kept up a terrible and constant fire, every now and then adding the blazing arrows, which still kept setting the roof on fire, and not a drop of water to extinguish it. The men below worked with a steady determination from which nothing could move them; they heeded not the cries.

"Water, for the love of God, water!" said one of the men in the upper block; "the roof is again on fire!"

They had stripped to their trousers, and having made the hole big enough, were all four down in it throwing up such heaps and piles of earth as had to be hastily removed by the women and cast into the open air. They could hear the crackling of the flames above, which seemed to tell them plainly that all hope of successful defense was fast being removed.

At this instant John Harding looked up, saw the smoking, charred, and burning shingles; saw the stern looks of despair and rage which animated every bosom, and at once ascended the almost perpendicular ladder which led to the flat roof, below the shelving one, and stood erect, a mark for the exulting, yelling, and delighted savages. A fearful storm of bullets

fell like hail around him, but he seemed invulnerable, and so fully persuaded were the savages, after a moment, of this fact, that they suddenly ceased firing, and watched him with an air of stupor perfectly ludicrous.

With as much coolness as if he had been plucking flowers for his wife's bouquet, he began tearing down the burning shingles and casting them out upon the ground. Then, having accomplished his task, he gave a wild, unearthly, defiant shout, and disappeared. Heedless of the congratulations of the men, he returned to his post, and once more the steady, unerring crack of his rifle was heard whenever an Indian showed himself.

The red-skins seemed now to be alive to the fact that the beleaguered force had no water, for suddenly, without a moment's warning, from every part of the rude breastwork, came a very cloud of arrows with blazing ends which speedily set the ill-starred roof in flames again.

"Hurrah! down with the buckets," shouted the excited diggers.

They had found water, which so near the river was always discovered at a moderate depth. In an instant a chain was made, and bucket after bucket passed from hand to hand, until the roof was perfectly deluged. From that moment the Indians appeared to change their tactics. The attempt to set the place on fire was not renewed.

But another feature was soon to be introduced into the combat. Darkness began to fall over the scene, and under cover of the night it was not likely that the besieged would obtain much repose. Still, as no immediate attack was made, it was arranged that all but four sentries should seek rest, every man sleeping with his rifle close to his hand. As soon as this decision had been come to, one sentry ascended to the roof and lay down in such a position as to command a view of the clearing between the stockade and the forest.

Suddenly the forest was again alive with the marauders, and the flashes of the guns encircled the block-house with a line of fire, while every loop-hole of the block was again spouting flame and death.

During this attack, Harris and John Harding, by previous concert, descended to the outside of the block, were let out of the gateway, and soon stood on the outside in the deep ditch which surrounded the stockade. Harding could not be persuaded to lie still any longer, and Harris had determined to accompany him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SCOUTING.

THE task they had undertaken was one of the utmost danger and difficulty, and which yet experienced hunters could hope to overcome by the exertion of those virtues and arts which appertain to backwood life. They were armed to the teeth, they had exchanged the heavy shoe of every-day life for the moccasin, which gives a slow and stealthy glide, while both were alive to the signs of the forest and the tricks of their ruthless enemies.

Crawling in the ditch, they made a detour in the opposite direction to that by which the Indians were making their fierce attack, and in this way almost made a circle of the forest until they came to a spot from whence they could clearly distinguish the Indians working at the trench, which was now within fifteen yards of the stockade.

This was alarming, as the intention of the enemy clearly was to undermine the stockade and force an entrance in this way. But it was of importance to know this, as here would be rendered necessary a determined defense.

Still this was not the object with

which they had come out. Harding was in hope to find some traces of Chloe, the nurse. He was in agonies as long as he knew not the fate of his child. Better, he thought at times, that she was dead in company with her sainted mother than a prisoner in the hands of beings who would treat her with worse indignities than death.

Then she might, perchance, be kept alive in hope of ransom, a very common practice with the Indians, who, when triumphant in their forays, would, after roasting and skinning one or two to serve their fierce passions, keep the others to satisfy their cupidity, which was only second in influence over them to their cruelty and savage instincts.

Crawling past the trench, the two men surveyed the ground. Their object was to reach the forest and get in the rear of the Indians, and thus discover whether they had made any prisoners, and if so what was their numbers, and how they were guarded. Harding was resolved, in this case, to run every risk to rescue her who was to him now his all in all, the sole thing which bound him to an existence otherwise desolate and hopeless.

They crawled forward until they nearly reached the spot where they had started from, when, without a word, they moved along a kind of ridge which led direct to the forest. The firing still continued with unabated vigor, which was the sole chance of those two lonely scouts. It enabled them to make progress without being in any way noticed by the besiegers, as flash after flash came from both block and forest.

And still they crawled on slowly, with the stealth of the serpent, until they reached a small hollow in the ground, where they took breath and peered forth upon the conflict. The defenders were repelling a furious attack from all parts. The Indians had simultaneously rushed from every point of the compass, and were pouring volleys of both arrows and firearms upon the devoted heads of the whites, the former weapons being always charged with burning tow and looking, in the darkness of the night, like fiery serpents.

How gladly would the bereaved father have leveled his rifle and picked off one of the ruthless savages, but his hand was stayed. Harris whispered to him to come, as he was afraid of the other's forbearance.

Harding followed him, and in five minutes more they had plunged beneath the arching bows of the forest. They moved with the caution of Indians, as in every bush and brake, behind every tree, in every hollow might lurk one of the loping rascals that so hungered for their prey. It was necessary to use the most extreme caution—to move a step or two, to halt or listen, and move again, scarcely venturing to touch the ground with their feet for fear of the crackling boughs.

It was the wish of Harris to cross the trail by which the Indians had come, and then work back to their rear.

Mile after mile did these two undaunted scouts pass beneath the gloomy arches of the forest, no through tangled undergrowth and brushwood, now up the rugged defiles of the mountains, down the precipitous sides, now over streams and gulleys, and yet not at any time being a mile and a half from the settlement.

Presently they entered the bed of a mountain torrent that fed the Wabash in rainy weather. It was overhung with trees, while not an undergrowth impeded their progress.

Suddenly both halted to gaze and listen.

They saw a dozen will-o'-the-wisp's.

"What is it?" said Harding, in a low, hushed voice.

Harris laid his hand upon his arm, and pressed it in token of silence.

The first man who came was an Indian, who held in his hand a knot of resinous pine, which enabled him to follow his trail with certainty. It was indeed a singular and ghostly company to look upon. It seemed, at that hour and in that place, a long train of shadowy forms, which glided like apparitions on a narrow war-path, silent, still, without step.

Harding cocked his rifle. Every torch was extinguished, as if by magic, and the forest, from mere contrast, relapsed into deeper and more total darkness.

"Be still," whispered Harris in the other's ear. "You may shoot friends."

John Harding ground his teeth together and made no reply. Every faculty of his powerful frame was stunned, annihilated, dead.

Then Harris stooped low, and gave three times running the hoot of an owl, which, being answered, he once more spoke:

"'Tis the scouts," he said, and rising, walked forward until he found himself with Massaquoit and half a dozen more of the rangers.

It was then learned that the few prisoners who had been taken, had been removed, under guard, to Chillicothe, where runners had gone in search of reinforcements. The Indian rising was general. The commotion along the frontier was unusual. Everywhere men prepared for a long and deadly combat. Every night the sky was red with the flames of burning cabins.

But little time was wasted in talking. The sound of the distant combat still was borne upon the breeze, and the united party determined on regaining the fort.

It was time. During the darkness of the night, the Indians had pushed forward a kind of breast-work close up to the walls, and had set them on fire. The men were nearly stifled by the heat. The exterior walls of the block-house began to smoke, to peel, and lastly to burst into flames.

The air was hot and sulphurous; while men, with heated and begrimed faces, still peered forth, taking incessant aim at the enemy, while others handed up the buckets with an endless supply of water.

And thus dawn came only to show them how little hope there was of prolonging the contest. As usual at this hour, the Indians made a general onslaught from every quarter, shouting their hideous war-cry in voices hoarse with fury and hate.

But forth from the forest burst a long array of men, armed with rifle and musket, who take the Indians behind, and change the nature of the contest. The forest rangers, reinforced by the inhabitants of neighboring settlements, who had marched all night, dealt death upon the foe. Then out rushed the besieged, and away to the cover of the woods rush the astonished savages, there to make a last and desperate stand.

The contest is now ferocious and desperate. With gun, with tomahawk, with knife, from behind trees and bushes, in hand-to-hand conflict, death is dealt freely round—but wherever the battle rages most desperately, wherever the savages make a bolder stand than usual, there is the bereaved husband and father, dealing death at every blow, and immolating Indian after Indian to his terrible feelings of revenge.

At last the Shawnee warriors broke and fled in every direction, nor halted until the scouts reported their total departure from the country. But the black and charred fort, the devastated fields, the ruin on the hill, remained to tell the story of one of the most terrible conflicts which signalized the commencement of that war.

Then came the funeral of her who had made John Harding a happy and contented man.

It was attended by every man, woman and child in the settlement, who knew and loved her. It was dreadful to note the grief of

that powerful man as he stood at the head of the grave and saw the coffin lowered. He watched while the grave was being filled, and then turned away without a word. They saw him no more. They heard that he had employed, at a great expense, Indian traders to negotiate for the ransom of his daughter, if alive, but the result was never known.

The settlement was rebuilt; but Mrs. Harris was so much hurt at the loss of Constance that she insisted on her boy being sent for safety to New York, where he was educated until he was a young man, when he, of his own accord, left the capital to join his father, and with a determination to fit himself for the life of a hunter, in order to qualify himself for the task of seeking out the lost child, which, in the warmth of his young heart, he suspected to be alive.

CHAPTER XIX.

DANIEL BOONE'S HOME.

SUCH was the story told by the young man to his companions, when, after their escape from the cave, they camped the next night at a considerable distance from the scene of their escape. They hid in a canebrake without a fire, to avoid being discovered by their enemies.

Their escape from the cave had been very simple. The cavern was an old cache of Massaquoit's which had a kind of shaft leading to the summit of the rock. In this shaft he had stuck a tree, which had projecting branches, which enabled him easily to ascend and descend at will.

Early in the morning, after a hasty meal, they started on their way, and traveling by forced marches, as it were, soon reached the spot where the two men had parted from their companions.

But not a trace of them was to be found. They searched the woods and mountains, they visited the block-house, they followed the trail across the prairies backward and forward in vain.

They had given up all hope, it was clear, and had returned home to spread the news, doubtless, of their having perished in the interminable forests and canebrakes of Kentucky. This decided them at once on a hasty return home, especially as the great hunter had fully determined to return with his whole family and settle in a country which so delighted his heart.

In his heart, Ned Harris approved of his determination and came to the same resolution. His mind was made up to visit the Cedar Valley, and nowhere could he hope to start with more chance of success than from the plains which the savages he was in pursuit of made use of as their hunting-grounds.

Harris was pretty well aware of the dangerous character of the task he had undertaken, and also that he must study woodcraft and Indian warfare before he could hope to succeed in the design he had so dearly at heart. This must, of course, be a question of time, while he must seek as much as possible association with men of experience and courage who were capable of initiating him into all the secrets of the backwoods.

The residence of Boone was at no great distance from the settlement inhabited by Harris's father, so that the young hunter determined to visit that first, and discover what progress could be made in hastening their removal to the lovely plains and splendid forests of the west.

Massaquoit led them by short cuts, which his experience made him perfectly acquainted with, and at last, after two years, Daniel Boone came once more in sight of his residence. There had been a storm in the night, but all now was clear. The morning looked bright and beautiful, the birds sang cheerily on every bough, the rain sparkled brightly upon grass

and twigs, and there they stood gazing down upon the village, scarcely yet awake.

It was like most of the settlements in those days, having a wall of buildings and palisades to protect the village. There were a couple of gates, near which a sentry always stalked as surprises were common. There were some thirty cabins, while all around were the signs of affluence and prosperity.

With a hurried step, the future patriarch of the wilds advanced toward his home, followed at a short distance by his two companions. When about thirty yards from the inclosure the gate opened, and two or three men came lounging out. Casting their eyes in the direction of the new-comers, they gave a loud shout.

They had recognized the truant and called him by name. In another minute, wife, sons, and daughters came rushing forth, too delighted to receive one, who, as it were, came forth from the grave, to blame him for his long desertion. The scene was an exciting and a pleasing one. All had given him up for lost, so that the rejoicings were the more hearty.

Then came the welcome to the stranger, who was most heartily received. The day scarcely sufficed for the record of their adventures, which Daniel mixed with so many vivid descriptions of the new country as to inflame the minds of his hearers. This was exactly what he desired, and when Harris left him that evening he privately intimated that he might hold himself in readiness, as he should start with his family for the promised land as soon as he could dispose of his farm.

It comes not within the compass of our narrative to narrate the events of the next few months, during which Ned Harris suffered all the torments of anxiety and doubt. Of a romantic and ardent temperament, he longed to be on the trail. Even if he should not recover his little Constance—his child-wife—he might be serviceable to some other white girl, and that would repay his sufferings and his labor.

But Boone was a long time selling his farm, and though the youth hunted and shot in the mean time, and inured himself to every hardship of forest and hunting life, yet was his impatience great, when at last the welcome summons came. Bidding farewell to his friends, and amply provided with arms and ammunition, as well as a good horse, he was speedily on his way once more to brave the perils of the wilds, and share the fortunes of the great pioneer of power and civilization.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CARAVAN.

MORE like a procession from the ark was the caravan which started from North Carolina, one fine morning, on their way to distant and unknown plains. There were several large wagons, drawn by oxen, to carry their valuables, and in which the women and children were placed. Then came some forty horsemen, armed to the teeth, with flocks of swine and cattle with which to stock the land they were to take possession of by the law of the strong arm.

It was Boone and his friends on their way to settle in Kentucky, where the brave pioneer and his companions—among whom we have to name Ned Harris—had, after serious hardship and peril, erected a fort and affected a "clearing" preparatory to a permanent occupation of the soil. This occupation it was the caravan's design to make, and despite the dangers of the enterprise, all, old and young, were in high spirits. None were happier than Ned, who, being the fast friend of Boone, had willingly consented to return with

him to the East, from which to pilot the little convoy to the "promised land."

Ned Harris was delighted. Not only was the secret wish of his heart to be gratified, but he foresaw that his love of adventure would meet with ample satisfaction.

They were about entering on a vast and dangerous territory, frequented by wild and savage tribes, who would not allow them to settle without a struggle.

Ned was a great favorite. His handsome face and figure, his manly tones, and readiness to aid any, women and children especially, soon won him golden opinions. There were two charming girls in one of the wagons, about fifteen years of age, who seemed never happy but when he was beside them. These were Amy Boone and Edith Callaway; of whom, more at a future time.

In this way the caravan continued on its way, ever keeping a sharp look-out; halting in places where a surprise was unlikely, and always throwing out a couple of picked men as scouts to seek for Indian trails. At the end of a few days they were far away from the outmost haunts of civilization, on the borders of the country they were longing to reach.

After crossing the Chick river suspicious signs had been marked of Indians, so that on one particular night unusual caution was exercised. The country was very wooded, and the progress made through the woods was so slow, that several horsemen determined to scour the country in search both of game and enemies. Among these was Harris. He, however, soon found that in the direction which he had selected progress on horseback was impossible, so, dismounting, led his horse, and began ascending a slope which appeared likely to lead to a height whence he could have a view of the country.

He was now alone, and cast upon his own resources; a thing he had long desired, as it enabled him to test his own capacity to deal with the difficulties of the forest unaided. The way he had chosen was steep and rocky, the trees and brushwood made him take continual turnings, so that it was a long time ere he reached the summit of the hill. When he had done so he found the hill so crowded by trees that he could not see a dozen yards. His only chance then was slowly to descend the hill on the other side.

Not a bird, not a deer-track had as yet rewarded his exertions.

It was now mid-day, and young Harris, looking up at the heavens, in order to make a starting-point, crept cautiously down a hill steeper than that which he had ascended. At the bottom was a kind of canebrake, very swampy, but, to his great delight, with a deer-track right across it. Slowly creeping along—the mark was recent—he held his rifle ready, and cocked it. Just as he did so, he heard something moving through the canebrake. His gun was leveled, he saw the head of an animal, and pulled the trigger hastily. The gun flashed in the pan, just as a stout horse, supporting an Indian warrior, with a woman clasping him round the waist, and a child being seated in front, came in sight.

The Indian had not seen him, his head being turned the other way.

Harris bent low, and let the Indian pass, while he kept his eye fixed upon the path he followed. Believing him to be alone, he crept behind without showing himself, following the trail, which alone served to guide him. The Indian moved leisurely, like one who was at home, and suddenly turning a point in the forest, came in view of a village by a murmuring stream. It was a lovely spot, wrapped in stillness, except that here and there warriors lay about smoking and chatting, while the women seemed to be at work in the wigwams.

Edward Harris felt that he was too near to danger to be pleasant, while also it was his duty to warn the camp of the near proximity of the merciless savage. Just as he was reflecting on the best course to pursue, some men came running from the opposite side of the open space, evidently in a state of great excitement. All the warriors, about a hundred in number, leaped to their feet, and Harris was at once convinced, from their gestures, that the caravan had been discovered.

Then the solemn gravity of the Indians returned, and while some prepared their arms, the chiefs held council, even sitting down round the camp-fire with pipes in their mouths, in order to fix their course of action with due solemnity.

There was no time to lose, as, once started, their course would be swift, from their knowledge of the forest. He accordingly turned to flee ere he was accidentally discovered, when up from the river rose a dense and heavy fog—the effect of a sudden change of wind—which spread over hill and dale, lawn and river, until he could scarcely see the bush five yards before him.

This was an awful situation. No man, in such a case, could find his way in the forest except an Indian. He might wander about until he was quite lost, or might walk straight upon the camp. Still, from sheer want of experience, he tried to keep away, but presently found his mistake. He could see shadowy forms close to him, and was fain to lie down and wait in silence.

Then he heard the low, monotonous chant of the savages, as they went through some incantation previous to their departure. Harris was in agonies. To allow his friends to be attacked, to suffer the innocent women and children to fall into the hands of people who show no mercy, was horrible. But he was helpless. To cross the mountain, with a war party in the woods, and enveloped in such a fog as this, was impossible. His only chance was to follow in their trail; and this he resolved to do. Listening, with all his faculties strained, he could distinctly make them out marshaling in a body, and, stooping low, heard the dull tramp of a hundred moccasined feet upon the sward.

Keeping, more by feeling than any thing else, along the edge of the opening, he came close to them, as the last man disappeared beneath the leafy arches of the forest. It was a great risk, as to follow he must keep them in sight, when he might himself be discovered. To obviate this, he tried to guide himself by the sense of hearing, and for some time was successful, though every now and then he almost stumbled over the rear-guard.

Presently he caught a glimpse of a tall warrior in the act of listening. His footsteps had betrayed him. The man stood still a minute or two, peering with keen and practiced eyes into every bush.

Meanwhile, the main body continued on its way.

But the single tall warrior, bringing his long rifle to an aim, stepped back slowly.

"Come out of there," said the tall man, in a hushed tone.

"Boone!" cried Harris.

"Hush!" said Boone. "Young man, you have begun well. An old hand could not have hit upon a more proper way of tracking the varmints. But hush, and follow me. They must not attack the caravan without a warning or we are lost."

Not another word was spoken but Boone, hastening on, ere the column quite disappeared, motioned to Harris to keep close to him. He was quite fit to grapple with the cunning savages. His nature was stern, simple, and enduring, and what a red-skin could do, that could he.

Presently they began ascending a slope and it at once became evi-

dent that the fog was diminishing in intensity.

Boone touched Harris on the shoulder, and drew him on one side. Then hurriedly whispering him to follow, he set off down a sort of gully, which seemed to tend in the direction of the camp. The path was rude and arduous in the extreme, but they were striving for those they loved.

Hark! they are at the end of the gully, a steep rock is before them, they are forced to crawl on their hands and knees; while close at hand they hear the stealthy steps of a large body of men, and there they go, just on the skirt of the wood, while below the men are lounging about, without their arms, the women and children, at some distance, near a pool, chiefly engaged in washing clothes. There is not a single moment to be lost. They clamber to the top, they level their rifles at the Indians, and then, with a terrible whoop, they rush down the slope, followed by the whole body.

In time, for the men have raised their arms, and the women have concealed themselves behind the wagons.

The Indians, in another moment, were flying to cover, in consequence of the tremendous discharge of rifles they had to encounter. They, however, soon rallied, and poured on the devoted heads of the emigrants shot after shot. But the brave pioneers were too good shots, and too determined, to give way. Their firing was incessant and deadly. The Indians were less expert in the use of their weapons, so that at last they retired, and the forest once more relapsed into its pristine quiet.

But Boone's eldest son was shot with five others, and several were wounded.

The grief of the brave hunter was terrible to behold, and a council was at once called, in order to determine on their future course.

A very large number wished to turn back and give up Kentucky forever, but to this the grieving but still bold hunter objected.

And his counsels prevailed. The caravan reorganized, and pursuing a somewhat diverse route by the Chick river, succeeded in safely reaching the chosen location on the beautiful Kentucky river, where the pioneers at once addressed themselves to the work of fortification and clearing.

CHAPTER XXI.

A SERIOUS RESOLVE.

A YEAR later we are on the banks of the beautiful Kentucky river, its luxuriant vegetation somewhat cleared by settlers, while a small town has arisen, known to fame as Boonesborough. Here the brave leaders of the thousands who afterward peopled the region, have taken up their abode, in the center of a wilderness, which they were daily bringing into subjection.

Not a single attack had been made on them by Indians during the whole period of their residence.

This pacific conduct on the part of the red-skins had been variously interpreted. Some have recorded it as the consequence of a desire on their part to be at peace, which desire would have been carried out but for that great contest between England and her colonies, in which the Indians were to play so conspicuous a part.

Advantage had been taken of this circumstance to push forward their settlements, to erect houses and forts, and generally to surround their habitations with corn and other fields, signs of present enjoyment, and future prosperity and happiness.

Hunting parties were organized within a moderate distance in the woods, without danger, or the thought of it; and Boone began to think the peace altogether too

quiet for him, he caring little for life when not accompanied by a spice of excitement.

There is enough coming.

Not a step had been taken in the cause which Edward Harris had so much at heart. Not one of the eminent hunters who were associated with Boone could tell him with certainty where the Valley of Cedars lay. Harris grew moody, was seldom seen in the settlements, and when there kept apart from all. His life was spent beneath the protecting boughs of the forest, until he became so inured to the life of the woods as to venture on the realization of a scheme which had long been pressing itself upon his brain.

He would start on his journey alone.

He knew the direction in which the valley lay, and he believed that, with patience and perseverance, he might succeed in reaching the place where, according to the story of Lealliwah, there was a white girl, who might be the long lost Constance. He knew that scattered over the vast continent were hardy trappers, who, in defiance of the Indians, traveled even to the regions beyond the Missouri river; and from some of these he might hope to procure a clue to the spot indicated by the girl as the secret home of the tribe.

This resolution had not been taken without due reflection. Every possible difficulty had been foreseen and debated in his own mind. A canoe had been secretly procured, arms and ammunition provided, and such provisions as would keep, stored away in a spot only known to himself. But though he was quite ready, he still made no signs of moving. He was waiting for Massaquoit, who had promised to come with the spring leaves, but who came not.

The young man and the Indian were great friends. They had, since the fight at Cumberland Gap, been much in one another's company. They had hunted the forest and fished the river together. But Massaquoit was needed elsewhere, so they parted; but not without fixing a rendezvous. Harris wished to see him alone, and before any of the others were aware of his return.

He knew well that every sane mind would look upon his project as sheer madness, and that all reasonable men would try to dissuade him from its attempt. He therefore kept it a strict secret, until it gnawed his vitals, and made him gloomy, saturnine, and worn, like one who has endured both great bodily and mental suffering.

But the time was fast approaching when his constancy and valor would be tried.

The sun was slanting down its beams, so as to show that evening was soon coming, when Harris walked to the bank of the Kentucky, at a spot remote from the station, where the river was as wide as a lake, and where a small spit of land indicated the mouth of the lagoon up which his canoe was concealed. Here he sat himself down at the foot of a tree and waited, his rifle resting on his knee. He was very thoughtful, for that which he was about to undertake was a dangerous and almost hopeless task; but what will not youth and enthusiasm attempt in the cause of affection or of love?

Presently, as the last tint of light faded in the western sky, a step was heard, and Massaquoit stood before him. The greeting was friendly, even cordial, for the Indian was used to the society of the whites. Then the two again seated themselves, and a pipe being lighted, smoked the calumet of peace.

Then Harris, without further preface, unfolded his design, to which the Indian listened with a deep and solemn gravity that became so distinguished a warrior. He made no gesture of assent or dissent, but a gleam in his eyes

showed that admiration of the other's courage was the uppermost idea in his mind.

"Ugh!" he said, when the other had concluded; "my brother is very brave, but ere one moon is passed he will lie food for the wolf and vulture, if he undertakes this terrible journey!"

"Why so?"

"The way is long, the trail is arid, and the forests are filled by my people."

"But go I must. Now, Massaquoit, go I will!"

"But why does the young white brave speak in the ears of Massaquoit?"

"Because I want you to paint me so like an Indian that not even a Shawnee would know me."

"Ugh!" cried Massaquoit, with a grim smile.

"I will be cautious and careful; I will travel by night and hide by day, so that not an Indian may see me. I feel sure that I shall find some traces of those who may guide me to the Valley of Cedars."

"It is beyond the great Father of Waters," said Massaquoit, who then, in picturesque and copious language, painted the thousand and one difficulties he would have to endure.

"My father is very wise," said Harris, quietly; "but a white brave has but one word—I have spoken."

Massaquoit made no reply, but after a short time taken in reflection proceeded to light a fire. This done, he opened a wallet, and took from it a number of articles necessary to the operation he was about to carry out. In the course of his scouting expeditions he had often to change his dress, to transform himself from a warrior into a medicine-man, or buffoon, and *vice versa*, according to the tribe he had to deal with. Harris wished to appear a hunter in the peaceful pursuit of his vocation.

He knew the language of numerous tribes, and trusted in this to carry him through.

The moment the fire was lighted, the scene became most picturesque. The light caused all without its circle to appear dark and gloomy, while the river flowed past like a black canal, and the line of trees on the opposite bank was like a perpendicular wall. Harris proceeded, by the direction of the Indian, to divest himself of a part only of his dress, which he then arranged in such a way as that, at a distance, he might easily be taken for an Indian. If captured, Massaquoit advised him to own to being a white man, who, loving the forest and prairie life, had adopted the garb of the owners of the soil. This the Indians might take as a compliment.

Then he proceeded to paint the face, arms, and breast of the bold youth with lines and totems that indicated peaceful intentions. He smiled grimly when he had finished, and said that if Harris were seen lurking about Boonesborough he would certainly be shot. Scarcely had the words been said, when the report of a rifle was heard, a bullet whizzed past, and, without touching either of them, buried itself in a tree.

The two men disappeared, like magic from within the circle of the fire.

"Indians," said Harris, whispering in the other's ear.

"No—white men—took my brother for Indian," replied Massaquoit, with a smile; and without another word, he cast himself down under a bush, and prepared to sleep.

Harris did the same, though he would gladly have had further explanation. But he knew the Indian too well to hope to extract any more from him. He could not, however, sleep for a long time. He lay and watched the moldering embers of the fire and the darkly flowing river and moonless night, listening all the time for the sound of another attack. But it came not, and toward gray dawn he fell asleep.

When he awoke he was quite alone.

CHAPTER XXII.

A STRANGE MEETING.

HARRIS felt no great surprise at the other's absence, but waited patiently until he happened to glance his eyes across to the opposite bank, where he saw his own canoe, and next minute observed Massaquoit come forth from the dark wood, enter the boat, and paddle across. When he came near, Edward noticed that he had a turkey in the prow of his boat.

A friendly greeting took place, the fire was replenished, and the turkey placed in a position to be cooked quickly. Meanwhile Edward waited with some impatience to know if Massaquoit had made any discovery as to the author of the shot which might have proved so fatal. But he made no allusion of any kind to the subject. At last the young man's curiosity could be restrained no longer.

"Did my brother see any sign of a wild animal in the wood?" he said, with a quiet smile.

"It was a pale-face hunter who shot at my white friend—one who never missed before," replied Massaquoit.

He said no more, and as Harris saw that he did not wish to be questioned he dropped the subject, raked the fire, made hot embers, and placed pieces of turkey to broil. As soon as breakfast was finished, he smoked his last pipe with his companion, shook him by the hand, entered his canoe, and with one firm stroke of the paddle, sent it whirling down the stream. Nor did he once turn his head until he reached a bend in the river which indicated that he was about to lose sight of the camp. Then he moved his head and saw Massaquoit standing motionless on the spit of land where they had passed the night. A slight choking sensation was experienced by Harris—the pain of all partings—and then he looked once more forward.

The river was well known to him, and so thickly wooded were its banks that he had little fear that day of being waylaid by any lurking Indians. Still he kept a good look-out, having his rifle close to his hand to be prepared for any emergency. The hunter and the ranger of the forest may never sleep except when under shelter, and then he must sleep lightly. He must be alive to the cracking of a twig, to the tramping of feet on grass, to the removal of a stone, to the rustling of the trees.

Every time Ned Harris came to a bend in the river, he crept inshore and examined the beach before him with extreme care, until convinced that he was safe. Then he pushed forward boldly, and ere nightfall he was nearly at the mouth of the Kentucky river. Then he determined to halt and rest for some hours ere he continued his journey. The stream was wide and swift, and in the distance could be seen the waters of the great and mighty river into which it was soon to be merged.

Looking round, he selected a small plot of ground overhung by trees. The bank was lofty and precipitous, but the boughs hung down low enough to almost touch the water. Underneath this he drew himself, and after fastening his tiny boat, and taking a frugal repast, he lay down to sleep with a cloak over him, and his gun close to his hand. How long he slept it was difficult to say, but when he awoke the darkness was intense. But Harris determined to proceed and rest the whole of the next day.

Pushing out into the stream, he moved far enough away from the shore to be out of danger of snags, and simply guiding his boat with his paddle, glided along into the great waters of the larger river. The scene was awe-inspiring to one of his temperament. Alone with

a vast continent stretching to the right and left, thousands of enemies on every hand, to say nothing of wild beasts and other terrors; it appeared almost madness on his part to dare such perils.

But he had faith in his good fortune.

About an hour after his journey began the moon rose, and he kept close to the Kentucky shore, for he could make out, by the pale, silvery light that there were savage villages on the opposite banks, while every now and then there came, carried on the wind, the baying of their dogs.

But Ned knew that he was not as yet near a district where he could hope to hear any thing of the Valley of Cedars, which he so eagerly desired to visit.

Hush! Even the sound of paddles dipped in the water are dangerous, for he hears voices close at hand. He was about to turn a point overgrown with trees, when the sound of human beings engaged in conversation drew his attention. Without a jerk, merely putting his hand out and clutching the first twig which presented itself, he checked the progress of his canoe, and listened. As he did so, he came within view of a small blaze of light.

"Keep still—persimmon and pickles—if but a spark was seen on the other side, they'd be down on us in droves. There's a big village opposite."

"I know it," said a stern, low voice, so deep and hollow as fairly to make Ned Harris start. "And there's dozens of widows and orphans to tell of the power of my rifle. I care not if they come."

"But this child does, considering he's got a tolerable veneration for his hair, and don't want it lifted. I don't care for a few Indians, but don't convene to fight a thousand yelling, yelping curs. We're on a nice trail this side, and can pick off a dozen or so."

"I will never spare one of the bloody wretches," said the other speaker.

Ned Harris was at a loss what to do. He fortunately remembered his dress, or he would have advanced to the camp at once—as it was, he determined to announce himself first, and advance after.

The two men started violently, clutching their rifles, but not rising.

"A friend is at hand," he said, in a loud, clear voice.

"Ayre you alone?" said the more prudent of the two.

"I am," replied Harris, "quite alone."

"Then come and show yourself."

"I am disguised as an Indian, which has cost me one shot already; so I had to be cautious with men who have such ideas about Indians."

As he spoke, he walked straight up to the fire and sat down. The two men looked at him without speaking, and he had leisure to examine them. One was a real down-easter. He was a tall, lanky-legged, gawky individual, with strange, thin arms and general awkward appearance, not detracted from by a very seedy hunter's suit. His leather shirt had seen very many better days; while his once white felt hat was so begrimed and muddled as to be very much like those we see sometimes kicked about by urchins in a field in company with tin pots and broken china.

The other man, who was clothed in a better hunting-dress, of dark uniform brown, was tall, muscular, with a stern expression of countenance, almost forbidding. He had rifle, tomahawk, and knife, with a huge shot-pouch and powder-horn.

"Who painted you such a particular guy?" said the first speaker—Nathan Hicks by name.

"My friend, Massaquoit," replied Ned.

"Then give us your list," said the other, suiting the action to the word. "I thought it was some of his deviltry. But what ayre you a doing up in these parts?"

"I want to find the way to the Valley of Cedars," he said, quietly; "I have reason to believe some white girls are kept prisoners there."

"Whew!" said Nathan, with a prolonged whistle; "the Valley of Cedars—why it's miles—thousands!"

The other man spoke not, but he gazed on Harris with eyes like burning coals.

"I don't care," cried the impetuous youth.

"And pray, young man, what are your reasons," said the stern hunter, "for thinking that some white girls are prisoners there?"

"I was a prisoner once with some Shawnees, and a girl named Lealliwah told me there were some white girls, though she was not sure if the one I wanted was there," said the young man, modestly.

"What was her name?"

"Constance Harding."

"And yours?"

"Edward Harris."

"I have heard of this before," said the man, with something like a hollow groan; "you must be brave and staunch to affront such danger for a chance. I have sworn never to spare an Indian man, woman, or child; but one beside Massaquoit shall be sacred. I have had that girl at the end of my rifle many times, but something, I know not what, restrained me. It was not her excessive beauty; no—it was not that; but there was something, I know not what. I will go to the Valley of Cedars with you."

Ned Harris listened to him with awe and admiration as he spoke in low, solemn, almost musical accents.

"Let us sleep, for at dawn we must proceed."

And he lay down in search of slumber which seldom is refused to the voyagers in the open air. But it came not readily, as for some hours Ned was kept awake by sighs and groans of a character which betokened a mind ill at ease.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INDIAN DEVILTRIES.

THE choristers of nature had just begun to warble forth their notes, when the three men sat up, on a raw, cold morning to consume their first meal, which was taken in silence. Harris was then told that he must leave his canoe for a day or two, as they were on an expedition which must not be neglected. A small troupe of Indians were about lying in wait for some of their own countrymen of another tribe, and already several had fallen. They were determined to exterminate the lot.

Ned Harris saw no harm in killing as many Indians of a hostile party as possible, so that he made no great difficulty about joining them. The hunters were on the trail, which was fresh, but concealed with rare art and ingenuity, as the mysterious loss of one or two of their party had alarmed them.

But not a speck, not a leaf removed from its place, escaped the eagle eye of the exterminator of the red-skin race.

About mid-day they came up with the spot where they had halted the night before, and whence they had not long departed. Without a moment's halt they were on the trail, which was now easy to be followed. At the end of about a mile they came to where it parted for a short distance. They followed the lesser, and then discovered that it ended in a small dell, where the signs of a great tussle were clearly visible on the ground.

"Some poor white man," said the stern hunter; "let us go."

And with terrible strides he hurried away, until they came to a sudden halt in front of a hillock, above which rose a column of smoke.

Up this they hurried, to find

themselves at the summit of a perpendicular cliff, from which they looked down upon a scene never to be forgotten.

In the center of an open space was a large stake driven into the ground, and surrounded by hastily made faggots of a combustible wood. To a tree was tied a man—evidently a white man—so as to be able to see all the preparations for his own execution; while men, women, and children danced around him, with a wild and fiendish exultation which appears foreign to human nature. They shrieked and yelled in a manner more worthy of insane maniacs than men.

Then their ranks opened, and the prisoner—a man of tall and erect form—was led to the stake. His arms were solidly bound behind him, and then another rope was fastened to his wrists, of sufficient length to enable him to walk round the stake. The faggots of wood were placed about five feet from the stake, and at a signal from a tall chief they were fired now here, now there. Then up rose the frightful yells and laughter of the Indians, as they saw the prisoner moving about within the fiery circle to avoid the flames.

But he spoke not. He knew the dreadful character of the men he had to deal with.

The Indians now formed in a large circle, and danced around, now holding out their hands as far as possible, then running up almost to where the flames burst forth.

The combustible hickory rods soon burned out, and there stood the prisoner, black, scorched, mad with pain, but alive. This was intense enjoyment to the Indians, who now flew at him, trod out the embers, and began mutilating him in the most horrible manner with their knives.

Then, at a signal, they desisted, only to change the mode of torture. To show what human nature can endure, we must mention that his ears, fingers and other parts had been cut off, but he was still alive and erect. The wretches now began firing charges of powder into the calves of his legs, while the devilish Indian boys applied burning brands to different parts of his person. He seemed blinded now, and as he ran about from side to side to avoid his cruel tormentors, only to meet others still more cruel, the women and boys screamed with pleasure, while the men sounded either the war-whoop or sung some song of rejoicing. Now they throw hot coals under his feet, until in his agony he shrieks for some one to kill him.

The tall hunter leveled his rifle.

"We shall be served as bad," said Nathan, quietly.

"I can not bear it," said the stern and dark hunter; "do you kill yonder tall Indian, while I shoot the poor dying man. Then run."

"Mighty tall tracks we'll have to make," growled Nathan, "to get away from them savages. But a willful man will have his way—here goes—"

They all three fired. The victim seemed to stand still, then stagger, and fall to the ground; while two of the most active of his tormentors shared his fate. The rest stood still, paralyzed, and then came bounding in the direction of the three audacious white men. They no sooner saw the effect of their volley than they took to their heels, making no attempt at concealment, but trusting wholly to the fleetness of their feet.

Away over hill and dale went Edward, losing sight of his companions after the word *canoe* had been shouted. For some time his pace was tremendous. Indeed, he afterward confessed that he never ran so fast in his life. But presently he ceased, to take breath, and turned round. Not an Indian was in sight. Still he knew that some dozen exasperated savages were on his trail. He therefore, after loading his gun, made tracks, as Nathan would have said, but not using

his strength, reserving it for a last desperate struggle.

His design was to reach the river, swim a few hundred yards, land again, and thus destroy the trail.

His ear was alive to every sound, and presently he knew, or thought he knew, that his pursuers were upon him. He was on the edge of a small prairie, bounded by some trees that appeared to line the river. Just as he began to run, he saw Nathan burst from cover, running at a fearful rate. A loud and triumphant cry announced that he too was discovered. It is on such occasions that men can run. They have been known to do so for twenty miles, and drop down dead at last.

The Indians came bounding after them at a fearful pace, that would have distressed a professional runner. But the white men gained ground, and the exasperated Indians then fired a volley, and the next thing Harris knew was that he had risen to the surface, after an involuntary plunge into the deep waters of the Ohio. With a hasty glance, he saw that Nathan was close to him, sinking. He tried to clutch him with his left hand; it was useless—his arm was broken. With a sudden jerk, he caught him with his right, and dragged him under the cliff, which, worn away by the vast accumulation of waters, projected many feet out at the top over the base.

On the waters of the Ohio floated a cap and an old white felt hat.

This saved them.

The Indians, after some consultation, came to the conclusion that they were drowned, and therefore turned their backs, in order, at all events, to enjoy the luxury of aiding in the capture and execution of the third fugitive. But though thus relieved, the state of the fugitives was any thing but enviable. Ned Harris had been shot through the arm, Nathan through both legs; while both had lost their guns. Their case could not be more desperate.

"You'd better vainoose, stranger," said Nathan; "I'm done for."

"Nonsense! we'll have many a tussle yet. We must make the best of a bad job. Here, get on my back, and we'll get yonder to where there are some trees."

Nathan obeyed with a groan, and after a terrible trial of Harris's strength, they clambered through the water, and reached a low bank overhung with trees, fell exhausted and fainting on the ground. When they came to, their first act was to listen carefully to find if they were pursued. The next task was to see to their wounds, which were painful. Here the experience of the practiced backwoodsman came into play. He pointed out leaves and herbs to Harris, who, after some time, found them, and making, under the other's direction, a kind of poultice, by means of water and two flat stones, applied to the wounds, using strips torn from their shirts to bind the rude but soothing apparatus.

Then their wallets were examined for food, which fortunately proved abundant, while both had rum, which they used sparingly. Then Harris took up his companion, and despite the undergrowth, despite the inequalities of the way, despite his own wounds, he went courageously on. He could go but little distance at a time, and seemed to suffer so much that Nathan often implored him to go alone, and send some of the rangers in search of him.

But no—Harris would never leave him. And thus, for three days and three nights, they crawled along, halting an hour at a time, snatching a hasty sleep, and then pushing on again, defenseless, unarmed; while the forests were alive not only with men, but savage beasts, that prowl about incessantly in search of human prey. At length food and spirits gave out. That night they lay down, two as forlorn, wretched and

hopeless men as ever the dark mantle of night concealed from mortal gaze.

They slept, however, for they were utterly exhausted.

"Go," said Nathan, when daylight once more beamed upon them; "go—I am dying! I can't move. Let me lie in peace!"

"Nonsense! Are yonder berries good to eat?" pointing to a bush near at hand.

The other nodded his head, and on some berries and water they made their breakfast; after which, faint, weary, and sore-footed, they went their way. That day Harris gave in every quarter of an hour. But courage and perseverance will do much, and when that night they reached the end of their journey, they were not far from the creek where the canoe was concealed.

That night they lay in a thick canebrake, and toward midnight were aroused by horrible sounds. These were the hideous yells of the savages at no great distance, while still nearer could be heard the howls of famished wolves. They had knives, and prepared for the last desperate struggle. But both Indians and wolves passed away, and about daybreak they were again able to start.

What the heroic Harris suffered can never be known, for he kept it to himself then and afterward; his agony must have been intense.

But he had his reward. That day the canoe was found intact, and the two exhausted and wounded men halted at once to recruit themselves. A hearty supper and a hearty breakfast revived them, and next day they were once more on the waters of the great river, paddling against stream on their way home. This was no easy task, as they were both cripples; but two days later, two unkempt, haggard, and worn-looking men drew up their canoe to a landing near the settlement, and literally crawled ashore.

Harris could no longer carry Nathan, so that they both had to crawl on their hands and knees.

No one was visible. They were doubtless in the fields. But, yes—yonder are two merry, laughing girls in a canoe, on the opposite side of the river, paddling themselves slowly along, and floating gayly with the river. For the sake of shade, they keep near the bank.

The two men know them well enough, and think how pleasant it is, after so fearful a journey, to find themselves in sight of youth, beauty, and happiness.

But Ned Harris sighed as he thought of those unfortunates far away, whose fate he so ardently wished to ascertain. A vision of a never-forgotten face came to him, and he gave a deep sigh.

Suddenly they turn their heads in the direction where the two men are lying. Harris has given a shrill cry. He has seen, though they have not, a tall Indian, bending from the bank, and taking hold of the stern of the canoe.

A wild, piercing cry from the girls, a fierce shout from the two wounded men, and the girls are gone, while crowds of women and old men came rushing to the bank. Harris cried wildly for armed men to follow on the trail, for the red-skins had stolen two girls.

"What girls?"

"Amy Boone and Edith Calloway."

Two agonizing shrieks burst from the grieving mothers.

"But where are the men?" cried Harris.

"Gone to Blue Licks," said a dozen voices.

Harris became dizzy, and lost all sense of where he was or what was happening.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BLUE LICKS.

THERE rose a wail of anguish from the two mothers most terrible to hear. The evil was so sadly without remedy—the men being absent—that no one knew how to act. The only men able to do any thing were wounded. It was a sad and terrible event, but nothing could be done. There was no one at the station able to affront the dangers of the woods and recall the parents of the children.

They must wait.

They must wait while the favorite children of the station were led into captivity, to suffer and endure indignities and insults to which death was as nothing. They must wait, while suspense and dread were gnawing at their hearts, and each rumor of the forest and prairie excited additional dread. Not only was the present evil—the abduction of the children—hard to bear, but the whole colony felt a secret presentiment that this was but the beginning of their misfortunes.

None knew what they feared, and yet all feared something.

The wounded and suffering men were taken into the fort and there put to bed, while one or two lads, with the ambition of men, glided off across the river to see if they could find any trace of the Indians. None feared any violence to the girls; they were young and beautiful, and would therefore be reserved for some young chiefs when they returned home. The boys found the trail of the Indians, but they had, to all appearance, departed in fear of a pursuit from the fort.

The boys followed the trail with extreme caution, but not seeing any thing of the Indians, and fearing to fall into an ambush, they started on their way home.

Their mission had, however, not been wholly without result. They had, at all events, discovered that the maidens were captives, and had not been murdered, scalped, and left a prey to the wild beasts of the forest.

Days passed, during which Harris and Nathan recovered but slowly. Their fatigue, together with the hardships they had endured, told upon them with terrible effect.

A constant look-out was kept for the Indians as well as for the returning party, which was daily expected. They had been already gone much longer than was proposed; they were in search of salt. One evening, the fifth after the return of the youths, and when the men had been gone nearly a month, a mounted hunter came riding in with the astounding intelligence that the whole party had been made prisoners, that the men were in the hands of the British—war having suddenly broke out—while Boone was taken away, none could say where.

The abduction of Amy and Edith was for a moment forgotten. Every woman in the colony had lost her protector; every woman was, as it were, a widow. There was nothing left for them but to break up the settlement and return to safer regions. It was pitiable to behold the desolation which had fallen on everybody. They went about listlessly, utterly ignorant of what they were doing; their thoughts wholly given to the beloved who had been taken from the arms of those they loved forever.

Their joy may, then, be conceived, when, in a few days, the whole party returned—Boone excepted—having overcome their guards, recaptured their arms, and fled.

When Boone started to the Blue Licks, it was to manufacture salt, which is made in abundance from the brackish water. Salt was scarce, and the Licks much frequented for the purpose. Every thing necessary for the purpose, including kettles, provisions of all kinds, were safely carried to the secluded spot, and everybody went

heartily to work, while two were charged with hunting. Not an Indian sign was seen in the neighborhood, so no fear of interruption existed.

But the war had broken out which was to transform a colony into an empire.

Both sides, desirous of making the struggle as deadly as possible, had enlisted the services of the savages, and thus began the ruthless struggle in which they were to be such cruel actors.

It was Boone's day out, and he had been very successful. Some of his game he had *cached*, while a part of it he was bringing home, whistling, as he went, in perfect security. Suddenly, as he was turning a corner of a canebrake, he confronted the head of a column of some two hundred Indians. He wheeled round, and ran as fast as he could, with a dozen yelling braves in his rear. He knew he should be captured, but he wanted time for reflection. The Indians were in overwhelming force. If he resisted, and blood was shed, death was the certain consequence.

Fleet of foot as ever, he soon reached his companions, who flew to arms.

"Don't fire a shot," he cried; "up with your guns if you value your lives. They are ten to one."

All had such faith in their chief, they knew him so well, that he was obeyed, and the whole party were prisoners, without a shot being fired.

Boone was very much blamed for this act, but he was right. It saved all their lives. Their blood was not up; the men were handed over to the British, but Boone was reserved, for what fate he could not tell.

He, however, speedily discovered that his being kept in confinement was intended as a compliment. They feared him more than all the others put together; but they also respected him, as was proved by their sparing his life.

CHAPTER XXV.

THEY START.

THE loss of the two girls, the uncertainty which hung over the fate of Boone, prevented the settlement from thoroughly enjoying the unexpected return of the thirty husbands and fathers. But Harris felt his forced quietness most keenly; his sufferings of mind were far worse than the sufferings of his body. He was nearly mad. Nathan and he were, however, well enough to walk about; and as they could do nothing else, they conversed of the past and laid plans for the future.

They were determined to start for the Cedar Valley, as Nathan had imbibed some of his companion's enthusiasm.

"But we must find Massaquoit and your big friend," said Harris.

Nathan looked sharp at him; it was a very peculiar and strange glance, but Harris did not catch it.

"My big friend, as you call him, is not so easily found. He's got notions of his own. I did him a service once, and I kind of trades with him twice a year; but it don't do to come near him too sudden. Still, I don't mind trying."

"Our wounds will be well in a few days," continued Harris, "and if Massaquoit comes in, what say you to a start?"

"Quite welcome, friend."

And in this simple way an expedition was determined on involving a long and wearisome journey, over hills, across rivers and plains, and a barren desert, where scarce any thing living could exist. Harris knew that Nathan was dependent on his hands for a living, so he made a contract. He was to have a horse, a new rifle, and a certain sum of money if they reached home in safety.

A week later the two young men stood on the banks of the river ready for a start. Massaquoit was with them, and two youths,

who had taught Amy and Edith to know what love meant, and who were their affianced husbands, would gladly have accompanied them; but the Indian runner disapproved of any further addition to their party. Force would be of no use; they must depend wholly on cunning; while three or four men could travel in much greater security than half a dozen, especially when all were tried and experienced hunters.

They had a canoe to start in. Several of the best men of the station had followed the track of the ravishers, and had traced it to the river. No doubt the Indians, then, had gone home to their village, satisfied with the prize they had captured. It was resolved then to journey to that point in a boat; land, and judge for themselves. But they had a visit to make on their journey up, which would greatly influence their future movements.

Starting about dawn, they journeyed all day, with the exception of one halt, and by nightfall were on the mighty river, and at no great distance from the spot to which they were bound.

About a mile down the main stream was a creek or bayou, so overhung by trees and creeping plants as scarcely to give passage to the canoe. They were, indeed, obliged to stoop in order to pass its mouth, but beyond that the roof became higher, and they were able to advance more easily, but slowly, as this singular place was dark and gloomy in the extreme.

"When we turn a corner, I expect, captain, we'll see a light. You must let me go forad then, and see if he's in the humor," said Nathan; "he's mighty quick at a shot, and mout take us for Indians."

Scarcely had he finished speaking when the canoe, gliding round a corner, brought them in full view of a scene not easily forgotten by Edward Harris for many a long day afterwad.

In the mouth of a cavern, about seven feet high and about as wide, sat the big hunter. Before him was a fire, over which was suspended, by means of three sticks, a small iron pot. The light, in that dark hole, fell full and brightly on his countenance, which was rigid as death. His eyes were fixed on something which he held in his two hands, while great scalding tears were chasing themselves down his bronzed cheeks—tears of grief and woe unutterable. Close to his hand lay his rifle, while around were guns, pistols, tomahawks, with several rude articles of furniture.

He looked like a statue, he was so motionless.

"This 'll never do," whispered Nathan, as he drew the canoe out of sight; "he'd be mighty riled if he knew we'd seen him, so I must just start him a bit."

And he, at the same moment, gave a low, peculiar whistle, and stepped lightly ashore.

"Who comes to disturb my peace?" said a stern voice.

"All right big 'un," replied Nathan, in a jovial tone. "How are you?"

"You are not alone?"

"No, governor; there's Massaquoit and Ned Harris—all friends," continued the trader, still in a good-natured way.

"Friends!" laughed the other, in a wild and savage way. "Enter. I hope you have some good excuse for disturbing my privacy."

Thus invited, they entered the circle of light. No greeting passed between them save that the man rose and allowed them to pass within his cave. He pointed to the iron pot, and by signs intimated that they were to help themselves. He did so himself. It was a savory mess of deer's-meat, which proved very acceptable.

Harris then, without exactly addressing himself to the lone and silent hunter, told the story of their escape, of the abduction of Amy and Edith, and the misfor-

tune which had happened to Boone.

There then ensued a silence, which lasted some minutes.

"And you mean to track those girls, even unto the Valley of Cedars," said the big hunter.

"I do."

"I will go with you. I know every step of the way; I have been there. But she whom you seek is not in that village."

Harris turned deadly pale.

"Are you sure?" he faltered.

"I believe so. But even if she were not, would you retreat? Would not common humanity make you sacrifice yourself for those other unfortunate whites who are prisoners there?"

"It would. If she, my little playmate," said Harris, with deep emotion, "be dead or lost forever, my life shall be devoted to the cause of injured humanity. If I can not save her, I will others."

"Nobly spoken, young man," said the big hunter. "If Constance Harding be above ground we will find her; but the task will be an arduous one. We have to pass through vast territories scoured by Indians; we may have to lie in ambush days, weeks, a month perhaps. Are you well provided with powder?"

"Yes, our canoe contains a good supply."

"That is well. Sleep, for we shall have to wake at daybreak. The trail is a thousand miles long."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A STRANGE SHELTER.

A TRAIL a thousand miles long, and what a trail—out there to the mighty West, beneath the setting sun, where the mountain-peaks rise to the sky, and whence come rolling river upon river to swell the great father of waters—a trail on plains where there is not a rock or tree, nothing but grass to feed the millions of buffaloes, which roam, as yet free and unmolested except by the Indian, who, killing them only for use, does not wantonly destroy.

A trail over the plains where not a blade of grass is to be seen, nothing but hard soil—through forests, swamps, and across rivers scarcely fordable even with boats, so swift are their streams.

To dwellers in cities—to men who have never left the confines of civilization—such an undertaking appears appalling. But there were giants in those days, and the early settlers thought no more of such an undertaking than we would of a pedestrian tour in some district where every comfort is to be found, and man is scarcely an hour lost sight of.

The morning broke bright and joyous, when the adventurers awoke. They could make this out both from the song of the birds and from the wavy light on the tree-tops. The big hunter was now as cold and saturnine as ever. He was mending a moccasin, nor did he, while Nathan, who knew his humor, prepared breakfast, make any remark. But he ate like a man who felt that sustenance was necessary to him; though he handed round a flask of whisky, he himself drank water.

It was in fulfillment of a vow, which, at a future period, we shall understand.

As soon as he saw that all were ready he rose, stepped into his own canoe, and led the way. He, however, went only a few yards, when he again set his foot on shore, and shouldering his huge rifle, bade them follow him.

This man appeared to have a most perfect knowledge of the forest. He turned neither to the right nor the left, but, as if he had been on a broad path, led the way at a pace which would have indeed been trying to men who had never had any experience of the perils and dangers of the wilds. But as he knew the tremendous journey that was before them, he made

regular halts, during which they sought necessary rest. This was done at twelve and at sundown, when their blankets were drawn forth, a small fire cautiously kindled in the depths of a hollow, and general preparations made for the night.

All conversed but the big hunter, who was more silent than the Indian—himself rather taciturn. After supper a pipe, and then sleep (always welcome) came to their relief—a sleep heavy and sweet. About midnight Harris awoke. He had felt a kind of oppression on his chest, which made him wish to turn. He did so, and was about to fall once more into a deep slumber when he heard voices.

The voices, too, were close to him.

He listened attentively, but could make out nothing more than that men were speaking, but in what tongue he could not say. He put his ear to the ground, but the conversation was then more indistinct. Touching each of his companions gently, and whispering low in their ears, he made signs in the direction whence the sound emanated. A half-suppressed cry, indistinct and low, was the only response.

Then all clutched their rifles, and slowly and methodically crept in the direction of the voices. As, guided by the sound, they had no need to keep together, each man acted for himself and advanced in his own way. Edward Harris stood up, his rifle ready, but not cocked, as a projecting bough or branch of a tree might set it off. And still the voices were distinctly heard at no great distance, but not more distinctly than at first. This continued for about half an hour, when Harris stood still, and listened again.

Not a murmur broke the silence of the forest, not a sound came floating on the breeze, but that eternal whispering of its myriad leaves, which, from the time the tree germinates until it dies, ever continues, though what secrets they can have to tell no man can know.

Aware of the difficulties and dangers of his position, Ned stood stock still for some minutes, in the hope that some indication of the whereabouts of his friends or the strangers might be wafted on the breeze.

He peered around, and at length, noticing in the distance a faint glimmer of light where the moon shed its rays on the clearing, he deliberately, with the soft step of a wild-cat, made in that direction. When, at length, it was reached, it proved to be a very circumscribed open space, surrounded by very large trees, some growing, some lying down—the victims of time—and overgrown with moss and lichen.

During his march, Ned had omitted two precautions—to notice the way he came, or the direction of the wind. There remained nothing then for him but to remain where he was until morning, when he would retrace his steps, or his companions would follow his trail. Close to his hand lay a mighty monarch of the forest, which, having become reduced to a mere coating of bark, had fallen, and lay horizontally on the sward.

It was a deep and cavernous hollow, as likely as not to contain a bear or snakes; so, stooping low, Harris struck a light with the hunter's inseparable friend, a flint and steel, and set fire to a handful of Spanish moss.

The hollow was empty, so, without more ado, he thrust his body in, feet first, and drawing his rifle after him, prepared to pass the rest of the night.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN THE TREE.

SOFT and balmy sleep is so easily courted by the denizen of the woods and forests that Harris was falling off, when he was start-

led by the snapping of a twig. His very flesh crept. Had any of the wily savages watched him to his lair, and were they about to capture him in this defenseless and awkward position? Again the crackling of a twig, close to the mouth of the hollow log, which mouth was obscured by lichen and moss.

Then a dusky hand lifted the kind of vail. Harris, for the life of him, could not repress a groan, at the same time that voices were again heard close at hand. The dusky hand disappeared as the young man recognized the tongues of a number of Indians in eager conversation. They spoke neither very loud nor very cautiously, but they trod softly. To all appearance they were utterly ignorant of the presence of long-knives in the forest, which was the more apparent when they halted beside the log, across which they cast the produce of their chase.

They had been fire-hunting. Harris held his breath. His position was one as desperate as could be imagined. They had evidently halted to regale themselves, and had selected this clearing from its convenience, and the fact, as he soon discovered, of a small spring rising in that romantic and secluded spot. From the voices, Harris became aware that he was surrounded by about twenty savages, who would be too happy to find such an occasion of adding to their enjoyment as capturing a pale-face under such humiliating circumstances.

But what is this they are about to do?

They are lighting a fire at the very mouth of his huge log. Yes! ^{ROCKS} are gathering wood; and then an Indian has lit some moss and dry leaves, which, soon make a cheerful blaze. Again larger sticks, then huge chunks, are cast upon the flames, thus discovering clearly to his eye the ferocious countenances of a hunting-party of Shawnees, whose glaring eyeballs and piercing glances appeared all fixed upon his own countenance.

It was a trying and terrible position—a heavy breath, a cough, might have betrayed him; while the smoke, which entered the hollow as into a chimney, so suffocated him at first as to almost force him into a fearful fit of coughing. But life is dear, and no man will more readily defend it than he whose bravery is undoubted.

Slowly, like a serpent changing his skin, Harris wormed himself as far back as the trunk would allow him, and there lay still and motionless. Fortunately for him there were cracks and knot-holes in the log, or his sufferings must soon have come to an end. Meanwhile, the Indians had begun their usual gorge. No one can travel with less food than a red-skin. He will traverse vast forests, exposed to the hazards of lonely sickness, of lurking enemies, and pining famine, with a few parched peas for his only sustenance. He will adventure on stormy lakes, on the great inland seas, in a canoe of bark, which the waves toss like a feather, with a handful of jerked meat. But when he has gained an ample supply of food from the hardships and perils of the chase, he will make ample amends, and feast as long as his stomach does not reject food.

This was the case on the present occasion. They had obtained a most extraordinary supply of deer's-meat, part of which had been removed to their boats, while the rest was preserved for immediate consumption. But what struck Harris almost with awe, as the feast went on, was to find that they had an ample supply of fire-water, which they must either have become possessed of by plundering a flat-boat, or by means which to him at that moment appeared more horrible still.

The horrid idea flashed across his mind that his companions had fallen victims to the cunning of

the Indians. They were amply supplied, by means of small kegs, with sufficient spirits to qualify the brackish or muddy water which they might meet with on their journey. Harris almost groaned with anguish. But for the noise made by the now reckless savages, as they ate, drank, and laughed, as if they had been in their own villages, he must have been heard.

And now a new source of uneasiness arose. As the drink went round fast and furious, the savages, with a perverseness utterly foreign to their usual mode of proceeding, began increasing the volume of their fire. This was a serious danger. The trunk, or log, in which he was concealed was dry as tinder—the moss and lichen would flare up like rockets; and if once the fiery element took possession of his lair, *he would be roasted to death.*

Again chips, boughs, and logs, were cast on the fire by the drunken Indians, who danced around the flames in a state of frantic madness, which can neither be imagined nor described. In vain one or two of the chiefs and elders tried to calm their effervescence and diminish the fire; their advice was not attended to; and after a scene in which dignity on one side, and drunkenness on the other, strove for the mastery, the sober men retired into the darkness of the forest.

This was a fresh danger. Harris had at last contrived to get out his knife, and had begun enlarging a knot-hole. But if sober and experienced warriors were watching on the skirts of the forest, lest their foolish comrades were surprised, what was his chance? Still it was quite clear that something must be done. The mouth of the log was becoming as the mouth of a furnace. As yet the bark did not blaze, the extremity exposed to the weather being damper. But it was slowly advancing toward him. It crackled and it spirted, it peeled off in fiery flakes, and then it roared, and the flames rushed madly toward him.

The hole he had cut served to create a furious draft.

For a moment he believed himself lost, but placing his mouth to the knot-hole he breathed the pure, fresh air, and felt revived. Still the heat increased, the raging mass advanced nearer, until it scorched his very head. Involuntarily he drew back and gazed at the fearful scene. He was looking through a red-hot tube, at the end of which jumped, and leaped, and screamed, a whole congregation of demons. Then it fell in a mass of burning bark, and not a foot of trunk separated Harris from the red-skins.

Again he pressed back, and then, to his amazement, after meeting with a slight resistance, he felt his feet suddenly become cool. But he was stuck—his belt encumbered with shot-pouch, powder-horn and other fixings of a hunter checked his progress. Calmly, with the deliberation of a man who was dressing for a journey, he undid the fastenings, and one by one disencumbered himself of all that hung about him. Then slowly, with, it must be confessed, fear and trembling, he moved out from the fiery furnace, the flames of which were lapping the bark within a couple of feet of his head.

Then he was in the open air, and next minute upright under a tree, leaning for breath upon his rifle. But he was not alone. A man leaped against a tree not five feet from him.

At the same moment, a loud report, that scattered the burning tree far and wide, so startled the Indians as to reduce them for one moment to silence. Harris knew well that it was his powder-flask, but did not wait for further examination, plunging madly into the woods, as two or three of the elder Indians started in chase.

But Harris knew that having gained a few yards upon them, detection was difficult in such a night as this; so no sooner had he got a fair start than he halted, slipped

behind a tree, and creeping instead of running, determined to outwit them rather by cunning than any trial of strength. He was well aware that to fight was useless, as he had but one charge of powder.

With this view, he kept gliding from tree to tree, until he reached the edge of an opening, over which was scattered both trees and bushes.

All was now still and silent as death, except the sighing of the wind, and what Harris, with some surprise, recognized to be the rippling of the mighty waters, which were near at hand. There was a somewhat dim moon in the heavens, which rendered crossing the opening dangerous. But it was equally dangerous to stay where he was; so, with a quick run, he darted for a clump of trees, the branches of which swept the ground, though they started from the trunk eight or ten feet above. He could now see the wide river, with its silver sheen of rippling waves, and the perfect wall of darkness of the opposite bank.

But his eyes soon turned toward the spot whence he expected his enemies to emerge from the forest. He had not long to wait. One after another three warriors emerged from exactly the same point that he had, and then a fourth, holding a torch close to the ground. This was terrible, as there could be no doubt as to the result. The trail on the grass was much clearer than in the forest.

There was but one plan which was feasible, and that was to make for the river. This he did with all the same caution he had already used. The river was about two hundred yards distant. He had not gone more than half this, when he found that he was discovered. The red-skins were coming up with terrific strides. Harris at once took to his heels, and had just reached the bank when a loud and peculiar war-cry alarmed him.

At the same moment three red-skins burst from the bushes to intercept his flight. He, too, would have turned, but suddenly he made an astounding discovery.

These men were guarding a small fleet of canoes.

Hope gave him almost fabulous strength, as singling out a particular canoe he entered it wildly, gave it a tremendous impulsion with his left foot ere it left the bank, and then laid himself down flat a moment, to regain breath. Then he peered out and saw that two canoes had already left the shore in haste, though he was himself a considerable distance out in the stream.

With a beating heart he felt for the paddle, which he fortunately found, and at once struck out for life and liberty. His way was down-stream, as the Indians were above him. The chances were very few. He was alone against some half a dozen men; he was on a river, the banks of which swarmed with enemies, and he was as good as unarmed. Still, every moment of life is precious; and Harris struck out with every atom of strength he could exert. The bright moon and stars that speckled the heavens were reflected on the calm surface of the waters, that rippled onward by means of their own weight; but there was a chill in the air which betokened a coming change. By slow degrees clouds came towering up; the stars went out one by one, as violets are veiled by waving grass; the moon was obscured, and then wind, in fitful gusts, swept across the rising billows of the mighty river.

Harris could no longer see his enemies, while the banks themselves were gradually obscured. Then the wind rose higher and higher, dull thunder came, and from the riven clouds burst lurid and forked lightning, showing his relentless pursuers closer at hand than they had been during the light. It now required all the energy and skill of pursuer and pursued to prevent the canoes from upsetting or being filled with

water; already Harris had edged nearer to the north-eastern shore, making preparations for a swim, when just as gray dawn touched the summits of the trees the gale abated, but not the energy of the pursuers, who were within gunshot, almost as near in-shore as himself.

He was about fifty feet from a projection which impeded his way, and was about to give a long sweep out into the current, when his progress was checked in a very unexpected manner.

"Keep on," said a low voice, "and when you get to the spit of sand yonder, bring up your rifle."

Harris was too astonished to reply, but slackening his speed, in order to gain breath, was in another moment on shore, and making his way upward, but not toward the spot whence the voice had emanated. The young man was too interested in the progress of events not to take every precaution he could think of.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE RENEGADE.

ANY one who had seen the mode of procedure adopted by Ned Harris after landing, would have been indeed surprised. Instead of making straight toward the spot whence the voice had issued, he fixed his eye on the advancing boats which were within half rifle-shot. As he expected, a gun was fired, but the ball struck the water some distance from the boats. Ned Harris became thoughtful, and as to become thoughtful under such circumstances was to act with caution, he selected a spot where the ground was hard and stony, glided along with a noiseless step, and passed behind the thick trunk of a tree.

Then he caught hold of a bough, lifted himself bodily up, and concealed himself in the branches.

It was a thick tree, the boughs of which were dense, and the leaves to be counted by myriads.

Then forth from the bush came peering a man of hideous and repulsive aspect. Tall, gaunt, thin; with hollow eyes, sallow complexion; with unshaven, unkempt, entangled hair; with a mouth drawn down at the corners in all the intensity which is given by hate, malice, and every evil passion; his ill look was further increased by his red hair, that straggled, matted and dirty, from beneath a coarse, red handkerchief. His whole costume was in keeping with his face, being sordid and filthy in the extreme, while even his gun was rusty and worn.

His red, bleared eyes wandered hither and thither with a keen and rapid glance.

He had evidently expected to behold the dupe of his disgraceful trick calmly awaiting his approach. But he was nowhere to be seen. Silence reigned supreme in the forest glade, not the cracking of a log, not a motion in the grass, betrayed the presence of a man.

He could not make it out.

"Wall!" he said, in the thick, murky, husky tones of a man who habitually degrades himself by the use of ardent liquors: "whar's the cuss got to?—hang me if I know. He kuden't 'a twigged, sartin. Here, come along, you doddered villains," he continued, as some Indians came in sight; "the fule's absquatulated!"

The Indians gave a sharp grunt of acquiescence, and then, securing their canoes, began a minute search of the shore. There was the mark of Harris's feet clearly to be distinguished on the water's edge, but that was all. Indians, however, are not easily to be daunted; and, scattering in the forest in every direction, began to survey the ground, examining stones, fixing their eyes on every blade of grass, casting quick glances up in the trees, but finding nothing.

It is only by the most constant practice that the Indian is able to acquire his marvelous power of re-

cognizing the passage of man or the inferior animals over his territories; and yet it is not all practice, as the most experienced white, who has dwelt nearly all his life with red-skins, never acquires this art in full perfection.

Meanwhile, the white man—the renegade, whose crimes were fifty-fold those of any of the Indians—turned slowly toward the river. Already that broad and beautiful stream was made the means of traffic by many traders and emigrants, while this wretch lived upon its banks for the sole purpose of entrapping unwary voyagers to their ruin. He would feign to be a white escaped from the Indians, in momentary fear of capture; he would say he was a weary hunter who had lost his way; and, when the owner of a flat-boat or pinnace would kindly put in-shore to take him, he was the first to rush upon them with frenzied rage, to destroy and torture.

The history of the revolting acts of this man is the darkest feature of that border warfare which was ever a battle of giants, but which, in this case, was, as it were, a contest between a tiger and a lamb. He showed no mercy; in his whole career one act of kindness might have saved his character from utter blackness, but there was not one.

The Indians themselves often revolted at the hideous character of his deeds.

Ned Harris knew him, and but for the presence of the Indians, would have rid the world of a ruffian for whom no man could have the least thought of mercy.

He was clearly within reach of his rifle.

Prudence, however, forbade any such act, and there he remained for hours, until the Indians returned, downcast, baffled, and furious, ready almost to vent their fury upon their vile companion—the fearful wretch, Simon Girty. He, however, met their grumbling with imprecations. After an altercation, which lasted a few minutes, the Indians went to their boats, and Simon resumed his watch. Ned Harris was faint; he knew well that if he allowed himself to get lower and lower, he should soon be fit for nothing, and at once resolved to make a desperate effort at escape. He knew in what direction his companions must be, and hoped, by good fortune, even to rejoin them.

By means of a long leathern thong, he lowered his rifle to the ground—that rifle, with its one shot, which to him might be life. Then, hanging down and swinging from the branches, he gently fell upon the earth, and listened. No sound. The renegade was seated on the bank, smoking. For a moment Harris stood still, his eyes fixed on the heavens to make out the position of the sun; then he took his way toward the quarter where it appeared his companions were likely to be.

And all this time the renegade sat still, calm, thoughtful. He was probably at that very moment puzzling his brains to know how the other had escaped.

To advance was his only chance; and if he did not find his companions, only in that direction could he hope to secure shelter, food, and ammunition, in the big hunter's cave.

Under a burning sun, over rough and briary paths, through rivalets and bayous—this a great relief—through bush, and brake, and thorns, he tore his way for a while quickly, but at last with a feeble and tottering gait that gave earnest sign he must soon give out. Night, too, was approaching—dark, gloomy night—in a peculiarly thick and impenetrable bottom, where, doubtless, the panther and bear sheltered by day, while ever the snake hissed in darkness and in light.

Nothing eatable had passed his lips but berries and leaves all that day, and at times a great sensation came over him; it was a dogged resolution to lie down and die. The writer once felt it when lost

on the prairie, and many miles from home.

He looked at last for a place to pass the night. Though it wanted a whole hour of sundown he could, he felt, go no further, and was about to cast himself wearily on the ground when he saw before him a plain and beaten path. His astonishment may be conceived. He did not, however, hesitate one moment. It might lead into the very jaws of death, in the shape of an Indian village; but nothing could make his fate worse than it was.

With eager eyes, and heart filled with a wild kind of hope, he moved along. He had not gone a hundred yards when a sight met his eager gaze that filled him with amazement.

It was the very last that would have occurred to him in that lonely, retired, and almost desolate region.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE HUT.

IN the center of a small clearing was a log-hut, indisputably the work of a white man, but a white man of slovenly and idle habits. A broken fence surrounded a scrap of what had been intended for a garden, but it was now nearly level with the ground. The hut, half frame, half log, was of moderate dimensions, with evidences of having been long built, since which time nothing had been done to repair it. There were shingles wanting in the roof; the logs were overgrown by moss, the planks of the framework were some of them loose, while the door itself hung loosely on its rusty hinges.

But it was inhabited, for smoke rose from the mud chimney, and then a woman, slatternly and ill-favored, looked out. As she did so, the branches of a tufted clump parted, and a man, with haggard and wan look, met her gaze, tried to articulate, and fainted.

There is something instinctive in the heart of woman, for before this forlorn creature rushed to see who and what he was, she reëntered the house, and came out again with a flask, which, as soon as she knelt beside the youth, she pressed to his lips. It was the coarsest whisky, but it was just what he wanted. In five minutes he opened his eyes and breathed heavily.

"A good-looking youth," she muttered. "What does he here? Is this his handy-work? What ails you, young man?"

"Hunger—thirst," he replied.

She laid his head gently down, and again revisited the hut, from which she brought forth a mug of whisky and water, with coarse biscuit. Dipping this in the liquid, she made him eat, which at first he scarcely could do. But soon a genial warmth spread through his frame, his eyes grew brighter, his pallid cheek resumed its native hue, and he ate greedily. Then he rose.

The exertion was, however, almost too much for him, for he nearly fell.

"Now, stranger," she said, "wait until I get you some more food, and go thy ways—the sooner the better."

"Go!" he cried; "I can not walk. Put me anywhere; on the bare ground. But turn me not away, until I recruit myself. I should die in the woods."

"You know not what you ask. Better a pale-face in his coffin, than in that place accursed. Be advised. Take food and drink, and go."

"But why are you here?" he said, eying her keenly, as he spoke.

"It is my fate. There are secrets which will be given up only at the last, and mine is one of them."

"What danger do I affront, if I enter there?"

"Death—a wretched, miserable, lingering death, if you are not gone before he comes."

"I am armed. I will remain. I can not walk, at least for some time." And he tottered toward the house.

"Then come in and rest. He will not return yet. But in the name of her who bore you, if you would not have murder, go soon."

And she led the way into the hut. It was small, murky, and evidently the abode of neglect. Not that it was wanting in furniture; indeed, there was a suspicious abundance of chairs, tables, and boxes, which made Ned Harris shudder. There were rifles, too, pistols, and powder-horns in abundance, of every make and country. Some low stools were set round a smoldering fire. On one of these Ned Harris seated himself.

The hut was about twelve feet square, perhaps more; but, crowded as it was with plunder—there could be no mistake about this—it seemed smaller than it was. About seven feet from the ground there was a loft over half the hut, which seemed also partly filled with similar goods to those which lumbered the whole space.

But what chiefly interested Harris was the woman. About thirty, and, on close examination, evidently having been not only good-looking, but refined, she was now aged by sorrow, suffering, and by drink. Her hair, once black, was now half silvered over; her forehead, once white and smooth, was deeply dented with wrinkles and frowns; her eyes, once piercingly black, were dull and bleared; her mouth, once a model, was coarse and puffy; while the whole expression of her countenance was that of patience, endurance, long suffering, and fear.

She must have lived long in an atmosphere of dread.

"Why do you gaze at me?" she said, suddenly; "did you never see a woman before?"

"I was trying to make out how one used to better things, and evidently well brought up, can be here freely, of her own accord."

"Silence! or I will strike you dead. Used to better things—well brought up! And will this never end? I live in an atmosphere of pollution, I drink, I am what I am, and yet the old heaven will remain. Talk to me of yourself—if me say nothing. Are you rested? Will you go?"

"I can not," said Harris, trying to rise, and again falling back, powerless.

"But he will kill us both," she cried, her cheek blanched, her eyes haggard, her lips quivering.

"Why?"

"Because he is wicked and jealous," was her answer.

"How soon do you expect him, and when does he go away in the morning?" continued Harris.

"He will be here soon—if sober, he leaves at daybreak," she replied, mechanically.

"I do not wish to bring you to sorrow. Could I not pass the night aloft, rest, and go away in the morning—and he know nothing?"

"He know nothing! A breath, a sigh, a single crack of your finger, would arouse him. If you slept you would never wake."

"But I will not sleep. The whole livelong night I will watch, for I stand sentinel on my life. When he has taken his departure, then, my limbs refreshed at all events, I will go, and bless you who shall have saved me."

She looked at him with a wan, haggard glance that spoke volumes.

"Blessings!—talk not of them here," she screamed. "Use not a word that should bring down fire from heaven on this house. But a willful man will have his way. Go up and lie there as still as if you were in your coffin. One thing I ask: I have befriended you—whatever you may hear or see, whatever you may learn through my folly in sheltering you, never reveal to living soul."

"Never," he said taking her

hand, "never will I forget your real and genuine kindness."

"Away—touch me not. Boy, there is blood upon this hand—the blood of women and children, of babes and orphans. It is a hand accursed. Once it was white and innocent—that was in days gone by, when—merciful heavens! let me not think, or I shall go mad. Go up, take your gun, be still, and may we never meet again."

Harris did as he was bid, ascended the ladder which led to the loft, crept beneath the rafters, and lay down weary and helpless. But close to his hand was his rifle.

Weary and slow were the minutes. Despite his danger, he felt come over him such a terrible desire to sleep, that it seemed better to risk death than remain awake. His eyelids closed, his senses every now and then left him, and he would have sunk into a sound slumber, when suddenly the woman rose and hurriedly went to the door.

"Come at last!" she said, in accents that to his astonishment were half reproachful, half tender.

"Yes, guess I have. Don't give us none of your foolery. This child's mighty hungry and mighty riled."

"Why?" asked the other, as she hustled to the fire to prepare his dinner, the savory scent of which, as the cover was taken off, rose with a generous effluvia to the loft.

"Some young cuss I trapped ashore giv me the slip. But never mind, he ain't fur. I guess we'll give him goss before to-morrow night. Ain't a-going to have any sneaking whites a-loading about my diggings. 'Tain't one of your old sweethearts, eh?"

This was said so quickly, and with such a savage tone, his long, pointed teeth showing all the while, that the woman very nearly let fall the bowl into which she was about to ladle his stew.

"How you frighten one."

"Wish I cud," snarled the brute. "But mark me—if ever I finds any white-livered settlers a-hanging about yar, I kills him and I kills you."

"There is One above who knows that I care for no one in the world but you," said she, mildly. "But yer did once."

"I did. I had a happy home then—a husband and children," she said, mournfully.

"Ha! ha! ha! and so you would now, if the cuss hadn't split upon me and got me that beating. I said I would be revenged. I bide my time, old hoss, says I. I wur a decent-looking chap then, and yer thought so, and I fawned, and I lied until you hated your husband and loved me. Ha! ha! ha! And then I killed him when he knowed it, and his lady-bird had runned away. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Simon Girty, Simon Girty!" she gasped, "let me have no more of these memories. They will kill me."

"Kill and be hanged to yer—give us my grub."

The woman, with a deep sigh that spoke of woe unutterable, of wretched subjection and a very obeyed without a word.

CHAPTER XXX.

A TRYING POSITION.

COLD to the very marrow of his bones felt Ned Harris as he became aware of the name and nature of the man into whose power he had so nearly fallen. Many and foul were the renegades who deserted their religion and their country, not only to consort with the red-skins, but to surpass them in ruthless cruelty, and in diabolical schemes of vengeance; but not one ever came near in wickedness, monstrous villainy and delight in the tortures of his fellow-creatures to Simon Girty.

Harris now understood the

wretched woman, who had been led by her own weakness and the other's cunning duplicity to become the companion of a monster.

If discovered, not only would death be his portion, but death under the most awful and terrible circumstances. To contend against this fiend in his present enfeebled state was impossible. He could almost fancy, as he lay on his side gazing out through the broken shingles, that the man must hear the beating of his heart. The night was singularly dark, gloomy, and storm-laden. He could hear the wind howling, with a sad, murmuring sound, through the branches, while every now and then a gust stronger than usual would make the trees shake their damp crowns and cast down dried-up boughs, leaves and rain. The sky was leaden in its hue.

It was a night for murder to stalk abroad, a night of sharp odors and mysterious sounds, though not a beast left its lair, not even an owl hooted in the forest.

Harris, however, except when he cast a glance at the outer gloom, kept his eyes fixed through a chink upon the man and the woman. The former was eating his savory mess with eager appetite, every now and then pausing to wash it down with draughts of whisky scarcely diluted with water. But all the time his eyes, like two hot coals, were fixed, with a strange and terrible glance, on the woman, who, with half-averted face, was looking into the fire. The expression of the renegade's countenance was awful. Doubt, hate, rage, were all mingled in one look of concentrated passion.

This fiend in human shape clearly suspected something.

The woman every now and then stirred up the fire or put on a few chips, but never altered her strange, fixed glance. She appeared thinking deeply, which, as she in general talked, laughed, and shrieked by turns, to drown thought, puzzled the brutal companion of her life.

Suddenly he pushed away his bowl, and began savagely to load a large pipe.

"And now," he said, in a sharp, squeaking voice, "let us talk."

The woman started, and looking quickly round, colored deeply.

"What ayre you thinking on?" he said, with a piercing glance.

"Nothing—nothing," she said, turning away.

"Nuthin'; guess that's the thing that makes you so tarnation glum. *Thar's been somebody yar.*"

The woman started, and then confronted him with a calm, yet deadly-pale countenance.

"Will you never leave off your jealousies?" she said, mournfully, "I ain't jealous," he replied, with a savage scowl; "no, not I. It ain't likely—but jist look at me. You've been up to something—I know it by your eye. Ef I thought you'd betrayed me—"

"What then?"

"I'd cut yer ugly throat."

The woman laughed hysterically, Simon Girty all the while watching her keenly.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CAUGHT.

It was a singular as well as a trying situation, both for the young man and the kind-hearted woman. Could she hold out against the menaces of her brute husband? Should she quiver and quail, Harris of course was lost. Were it not better, then, to shoot the villain as he sat there before the woman could make any revelation? There was no time for thought, for Girty proceeded at once with his inquisition:

"Eliza," he said, in a hoarse, hollow tone, "somebody's been here."

"Well, and what then?" she said, quietly. After a moment's

thought she had decided on her course of action.

"What then?" he said, with a howl like that of a wild beast; "you shall see. Who was it?—speak, yer everlasting—"

"A wounded youth," she continued; "I gave him meat and drink, and sent him away."

"A tall, good-looking fellow in hunting-clothes?" said Simon Girty.

"Yes."

"Then, as sure as my name is Simon Girty, yer dies;" and he clutched his knife.

"Why?"

"Why? because this here place ain't safe nohow. If that skunk only gits off—oh, no! he'll never come back with his everlasting all-fired rangers and burn me out of house and hum—oh, no!—you infernal traitor!"

"I am no traitor, Simon. A man like thoe I knew in better days came here. He was weary, footsore, and dying with hunger and thirst. He fainted on my threshold, and no woman could have done less than I did. I gave him what he needed, refused him a shelter, and then I sent him away."

"And why did yer send him away?" he asked, in accents choked with passion.

"Because you have blood enough upon your hands already," she said, with a shudder.

"You'll find I'll have more," he replied, savagely, "you drotted fule! The boy had balked me. Now he has escaped, you shall suffer, by the internal! I give you five minutes!"

And slowly, without evident passion, but with his face a whity-brown, showing his long, pointed teeth, while his eyes glared hideously, the man rose—rose, knife in hand, as a butcher might to slay a sheep. Murder had so stained his soul, that even the thought of killing one who was unto him as a wife did not move him as it would have moved other men. This wretch had come to regard the slaughter of his fellow-men in the same light that an executioner does—as a trade and vocation.

And the night was still dark, the sky was storm-laden, and the gusts shook the forest trees to their foundation.

"Simon," said the woman, rising and confronting him with her arms hanging to her side, "I fear not to die. There is nothing in life worth living for. I have lost all that makes woman cling to earth—my home, my husband, and my little ones. I have lost worse—my own self-respect; joy in this world, and hope in the next. And now I have lost that for which I have periled my soul—your love. In those days when, underneath the shelter of the old apple-tree in the old orchard, you kneeled at my feet and in honied accents sought to win my soul—another serpent in the garden of Eden—you loved me."

"Guess you were a fine gal then?"

"I am an old woman, now, I know. But, Simon, because you loved me, you may not kill me. Let me go forth and face the savage panther, the ferocious bear, or still more ferocious and savage Indian—let them kill me to-night—to-morrow, when they please. But do not you stain your soul with the blood of one who, degraded as she is, still loves you and was once loved by you."

"I don't hate, and I don't love yer," said Simon Girty, coolly. "All I kin say is this here—you've done the traitor by me, and I've caught yer out. You've got to die, that's prairie law."

She fell on her knees and clasped her hands. He caught her by the hair of her head.

"Have mercy—have mercy on yourself!" she added, as he raised his blood-stained knife.

A strange look lit up his eyes at that moment, a look which the woman saw not, but which, had she seen, would have chilled

her very soul it was so fiendish, hellish, and triumphant.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed, as he let her go. "Yer only a sucking fule. Think I ain't got no better game than you? Thar, no more about it; only this—no more loping skulkers comes in here, or them and you don't go out alive."

She rose from her knees, and once more sat before the fire, rocking herself to and fro with the air of one who has done with life, and has not a word to throw away unnecessarily.

Simon watched her with his bleared and bloodshot eyes, with a glance which was scarcely to be translated.

What had saved her? We shall probably soon discover.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE INDIANS.

AND still the night was dark.

Suddenly Simon Girty, who was smoking in a state of complete abstraction, raised his head, and a diabolical smile illumining his features, spoke once more.

"Put on the kettle and pull out a keg of whisky—here's company a-coming."

She made no reply, but as she turned her back to hang the kettle over the embers, an awful, horror-struck, scared expression passed over her countenance. She could scarcely lift the iron pot. As, however, she placed it on the fire, four Indians stalked in, and, without a word, seated themselves.

It is perfectly true that the red-skin in his own village is as merry, light-hearted, and full of fun as the volatile Frenchman. They are equally fond of exciting admiration by boasting of their achievements, as of exciting laughter by comic and humorous tales. But in their intercourse with the whites, policy, as well as ignorance of our language, necessarily makes them stolid, while they are, indeed, as grave and stiff as statues when engaged on serious business.

One of the savages had bears' claws mingled with buffalo teeth formed into a collar round his neck, proclaiming him to hold no ordinary rank.

For some time there was silence, while Simon Girty prepared the calumet or pipe of peace, which was duly handed round and smoked in silence.

"Why has my brother called us? Where is the pale-face warrior? How did he escape when our young men would have made whistles of his bones, and drunk fire-water from his skull?"

"Wull," said Girty, taking the kettle from the woman, and mixing stiff glasses of hot whisky for the Indians, "I guess this child never was so licked afore. That 'ere youngster must have had Satan's luck, not barring his own. I kain't make it out."

"He went not through the forest. Not a bush, not a brake, not a blade of grass, but was examined. He lies hidden like a fox," said the chief.

"Guess you're about right," said Simon Girty, with a grin, "guess you ayre. But as I'spects to get him, what shall we do when we does?"

"My brother is very good. Why does he ask the red-skins when he knows better than they do?"

This was said with all the lofty courtesy of a genuine gentleman of the wilderness. But it was lost on the ignoble soul of Simon Girty.

"Wal—I reckon, friend Little Black B'ar, I has an idear or tu. But as this young skunk," with a terrible look at the woman, while at the same time he took up a piece of wood and began cutting off small pieces with his knife, "has particularly riled me, I should like somethin' new."

The Indians bowed their heads, with grim and ghastly smiles.

"Burnin's old. Thar's old Craford; 'spect we gave it him hot—only that's a long job."

Not a word.

"Shootin' at legs and arms is putty well; but it wastes good powder, and that ar's scarce."

Again the Indians nodded approval.

"But, d'ye see?—thar's one job I hearn on, but never seen—that's cutting off toes, ears, and fingers, and then skinnin' alive."

And Simon Girty laughed aloud, while the Indians nodded gravely.

"But what says my brother, who is so wise? How are we to catch this pale-face runaway?"

"That ar's easy if yer makes up yer mind to what we shall do with him," said Simon Girty, confidently, as he sipped his whisky with a deliberation and calmness secretly admired by the Indians.

The woman trembled. She sat pale and ghastly in a corner out of reach of the light, which flickered from the hearth upon walls, roof, and the inmates of the hut.

"If my brother wishes it," said Black Bear the younger, with a courteous bow, "the long-knife shall be skinned alive."

"Thar!" cried Simon Girty, with a hideous chuckle; "you hearn tell. They've decided, not me. Now you know your fate, perhaps *you'll come down.*"

The woman rushed forward and fell upon her knees. She understood now what had saved her life. It was the click of Harris' rifle as he prepared to shoot the ruffian, which, falling on his ear, had stayed the murderous stroke.

"Do not stain your own hearth. The man was a weary wayfarer, and I gave him shelter. He would stop, and I bade him rest until you left here in the morning."

"Wretch! let your paramour kim down; or, by the 'tarnal, you'll suffer in his place."

"Monster!" said the calm, deliberate voice of Ned Harris, "I am coming. But for her, your guilty soul would long since have winged its flight."

And without another word he calmly descended the ladder, and stood in their midst. No one offered to touch him. He was unarmed, and they had guns, tomahawks, and knives; so that resistance was simply madness.

"So," said Simon, as he surveyed the handsome youth, with a glance of intense hatred and envy, "this here's the way yer galavants with a feller's wife when his back's turned."

"You lie, and you know it," replied Harris, folding his arms and gazing fixedly at him.

"Wal, that ain't here nor thar. I suppose you're ready," sneered Simon.

"I hope I always am, for I have a good conscience. I never slew my fellows in cold blood; my hands are not reeking with the gore of women and children of my own race; I never lied, and fawned, and sneaked; I never committed petty felony—and I never was caned until the blood ran down my back."

"Thunder!" yelled the renegade, who felt this latter allusion most keenly, "but you shall never say that 'ar again, I kin tell yer." And he drew his long knife.

"Not before me—let me go outside—anywhere," gasped the woman.

"Go," grinned Simon; "I'm glad you stopped me. Killing right off is too good."

And while the Indians grunted approval he sheathed his knife.

The woman fled, screaming and wailing, nor did her cries cease until they were lost in the distance, beneath the wildly-wailing woods, over which still hung the dark and gloomy sky.

Used as she was to horrors and crimes, this one seemed to her too terrible to bear. The young man reminded her of one whom she could never forget, despite her degradation—her noble, good, outraged, and murdered husband.

Her very soul bled, then, at the thought of what was going to be

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A FIEND'S WORK.

HARRIS never flinched. There was something in the heart of such a man, of which a blood-stained wretch like Simon Girty had no conception. A sense of honor, and a determination not to give way, no matter what tortures might be heaped upon him, sustained him, even in this hour of trial. There was something, too, in the presence of the woman, from the fact that she was a woman, and as such, must feel some sense of pity, which gave him comfort, and enabled him to face the villain with a defiant air. But, even she had disappeared. He looked about on that dark circle, and not a face gave a sign of sympathy. Yet, the countenances of the savages were not so terrible as that of Simon Girty.

"So yer trapped, eh?" he snarled. "Yer caught fair and squar". D'ye think I didn't know ye was thar? D'ye think I didn't hear the click of the rifle? I know the sound too well. Thar ain't a man, not even Boone himself, that I hate wuss than you."

"Do your worst, Simon Girty. Black-hearted dog, traitor to all that is good and true, I might have killed you where you stood, but a woman's presence saved you. And why, you ask? Because that woman had been kind to me, and had given me rest, shelter and food."

"Do yer happen to know what our wust is? Ye heard our friend Black B'ar. He tho't of skinnin' yer. That's a captile idee. It suits me. It's worthy of the head that planned it, one of the best among the Shawnees."

"I repeat, I do not fear you," replied Harris. "What does it matter to a man how he dies? But, beware Simon Girty! The hand which administered deserved punishment to you once, yet remains to avenge any wrong you may heap upon me."

"But yer young," said Girty, who, with a fiendish delight, gloated over the prospective agony of his prisoner. "Yer very young. A man like you has the world before him. It looks bright and cheerful. Prehaps ye've got a woman some'ers as cares for ye, an' will cry her pretty eyes out at yer loss? Oh, wouldn't I like to be hid some'ers, and hear her, an' then break in an' tell her that we put an' end to yer, an' then—"

The hideous menace which was conveyed in that unfinished sentence was something terrible.

"I came on an errand of mercy, and I am on a search which only ends—"

"It ends to-day," said Girty.

"Perhaps so; I am in your power. But, whether I live or die, I am glad of the opportunity of seeing you face to face, and telling you what a villain you are."

"An' to think the durned fool had me within reach of his rifle, an' spared me!" grunted Girty, his face wreathed in demoniac smiles. "Only to think!"

"Yea know why I spared you."

"I don't keer. Would I be sech a fule? An' to see me lay low an' keep dark, waiting for my friends? Wal; got any thing more to say?"

"Words will not avail me. Do with me as your brutal heart prompts you. Whatsoever wickedness you are capable of doing, end it as soon as you can."

"End it, young un! Don't think it. It will be many bloody hours before you will see the end. Oh, when I hear ye howl, when the red hot fire-brands are stuck into yer flesh, won't I laugh, an' say, that is for comin' inter an honest man's house while he's away, a-tamperin' with his wife."

"I say what I said before, you lie, Simon Girty. The woman was kind to me, and if I live to do her a service, and it is in my power, I will gladly do it, even if it be the great service of taking away your hateful life."

"Don't think to do it, young man. Yer time here will be short enough—shorter than ye think,

but long enough for you. Tie him to the cheer, Black B'ar."

The Indians seized upon the young man, and tied him firmly to a huge chair, which Girty had cut from a block of wood.

"That's right. Put sticks on the fire now. Come; don't waste time; I long to be at him."

Two or three Indians ran out, and found sticks which they heaped upon the fire. A great blaze leaped upward. From a receptacle near the fire Simon now took out several broken knives, the blades of which he thrust into the blaze.

"Let them heat," said he. "In the mean time, let's hev a little fun with him. Don't ye begin to tremble now, ye young reptile. Don't ye wish ye'd never come into an honest man's house?"

"Honest!" sneered Harris. "You don't know what that means. You know what you were whipped for, don't you? Don't say any more about honesty."

"Don't say that ag'in," howled Girty. "Ye make my blood bile, when I think that Simon Girty has lived so long, an' done so little to avenge that insult. My curse, my bloody curse on them that did it."

"You deserved it," said Harris.

"They were merciful to you."

"They druv me out from among 'em," he snarled. "They set me with my face to the wilderness, and said, 'let him live or die; what do we keer?' I'll have a bloodier revenge yit, for the divil-try they did that day. Ye kem on a s'arch, di ye? Where's Boone's darter? What's the Calloway gal? Ha, ha! Simon Girty lives yit, an' will live longer, durn ye."

"Villain! Was it you that dragged them from their homes?"

"That tecked ye, did it? I tho't it would. Mebbe one of them is the gal ye love? If I thort so, ef I know'd it, I'd hev her brought here, an' before yer face I'd do a deed that 'ud make ye howl fer very rage. I wish I know'd it. Which one is it?"

"Neither."

"I believe ye lie."

"Do you suppose I would tell you, even if it were true? Set the girls at liberty, and do with me as you choose."

"Thank yer. It's very kind of ye to say that. Set 'em at liberty, an' then do with you as we please? Thank ye, I say ag'in! But, I don't think we kin let ye off that way long ez we hev got ye safe anyhow. It didn't strike ye before that it would be a foolish thing to give up somethin' for nothin'?"

"Simon Girty, listen to me. If I were at liberty, I would go down on my knees to plead with you. Think of the agony of those poor mothers; think how they lie in their beds, thinking, hour after hour, of the terrible danger of their loved ones. Do one good deed, and feel the blessing it would bring."

"I ain't a fool," said Girty, in a hoarse tone. "I kain't give up my revenge."

"You have no enmity against these poor girls."

"Hain't I? I have ag'in' their fathers, and old Dan'l Boone may nowl fer his darter. She won't come back to him no more. I'm thinkin' to turn Eliza out of the house, an' take her in. She'd make a hansum wife. Ef the chief will give her up I believe I'll do it."

"Infamous wretch!" said Harris.

"Seems ter me yer mighty free with hard names, fer a man in yer sivation. I'd be keeful, ef I was you. It won't hurt ye to keep a still tongue in yer head."

"You can not do more than kill me."

"Yes, I kin. But, I'm wastin' time. Grit yer teeth, young un. I'm goin' to show yer a trick ye never thought of. I was licked till the blood run down my back, was I? I'll see how you like it, yerself."

The ruffian stripped the hunting-shirt from the back of his victim, and went out of the hut.

While he was gone, Little Black Bear and his comrades stood like statues of bronze, never changing the expression of their faces. Simon Girty came back in a moment, bearing in his hands a number of lithe hickory whips.

"Ye bragged ter me that I was lashed, did ye? I'll let ye know that Simon Girty ain't to be insulted. Now, then."

Selecting one of the longest and largest of the whips, he raised it above his head, and it fell, with a sharp, hissing sound, on the naked shoulders of the young man. The sufferer would have borne any torment rather than let Girty suppose he felt the blows. At every stroke of the lithe hickory the flesh rose in broad, white welts; then the blood began to come, and the back of the young hunter was crimsoned with the flowing tide. At last the villain paused, wearied with the exertions he had made, and looked at the face of the prisoner. Not a muscle moved to show the torment he endured.

"Yer a game one," said Girty;

"how did ye like that?"

"I am in your power," replied Harris;

"go on."

"Not jest yet; I've licked ye enough jest now—sech a lickin' will teach ye not to speak of it ter a man that's suffered the same. See yer."

He went to a barrel, which stood near the door, and stooping, lifted a little of the contents in his hands and threw it on the bleeding back of the young man. Every drop scorched like a burning coal, for it was a strong brine which he had used in pickling venison.

"Yah!" said Girty, "does it feel warm? Oh, we ain't begun yit; mebbe we will putty soon. When we begin in earnest it will be somethin' like fun."

Harris made no reply.

"Don't turn sullen, now; speak up like a man. I'll own ye bore that lickin' well; thar ain't many in this yer kentry thet could beat ye at thet. Now, my friends, ye want a hand in, I s'pose? Take up the cheer an' carry it out."

They took the prisoner out into the open air, and stationed themselves some twenty feet away, where they amused themselves by throwing knives and hatchets at his head, which had been left free, so that they might see him dodge when the weapons came too near. But in this they were disappointed; the youth looked them in the face with an unblenching eye, and laughed at them, taunting them in the Shawnee tongue.

"Birds are picking at me," he said; "wood-peckers have dropped from the tree-tops on my head."

"My brother is a great brave," said Black Bear; "we are proud to torture so great a warrior. Perhaps we may yet do something to hurt him; but he does not fear knives and hatchets."

"The long-knives do not fear steel or iron," said Harris, hoping to say something which would put an end to his tortures. "The Indians fear them, and run from them like dogs from a whipping. Why should we fear the Shawnees? They were a nation of braves, but none of the chiefs are left; they take a dog for a chief, whom we have whipped out from among us, like a cur, because he was a thief."

A yell of rage broke from the Indians at this allusion to Girty, who literally foamed at the mouth in his frenzy at the taunt.

"When other tribes choose a chief," said Harris, "they look among their own people, and when they find the man that is bravest in battle, and who has taken many scalps, they hang the wampum upon his shoulders, and make him a ruler. But the Shawnees do not so; they take a white man who is scorned by every brave who is not a dog."

"The white man speaks lies of my brother Girty," said Little Black Bear.

"He dare not deny it," said Harris. "Let him speak."

"Shet up!" roared Girty, "or I will gag you. Don't think I'll let ye make me mad enough ter kill ye; I cum pooty nigh it onct—I won't do it ag'in. Go on, my brothers; this man is the one they call among the long-knives 'the liar,' and that he is."

Harris laughed contemptuously.

"Don't listen to him," shouted Girty. "Bring out the knives."

A species of fascination, which she could not resist, had again drawn the wife of Girty to the spot. As the villain issued this last order, she rushed from her place of concealment behind the house, and fell at his feet.

"Git up," said Girty; "didn't I send you away? What the catamounts are ye doin' hyar? Git out."

"Oh, Simon, I asked you before to spare him; I beg it again, on my knees. For the sake of the love you once bore me, even for the sake of the unhallowed past, which I can not bear to think upon, spare this young man. He makes me think of—"

"Who, woman?" yelled Girty.

"My husband—the man who was murdered for my sake."

Uttering a savage execration, the brute lifted his right hand, and struck her down; but she rose and clung about his knees, and even while his blows fell thick and fast upon her head, she pleaded for the victim before her. Her hair was loose, and floating on her shoulders; the blood was streaming down her pallid face, from a cut in the temple. At length, in a transport of rage, he snatched up a hatchet, which lay near, and struck her with the edge. She fell like a log, the blood flowing from a new wound in her head.

"Murderer!" cried Harris; "as God is my judge, if I ever escape, I will call you to a bloody account for that blow."

"Who set ye up to interfere atween husband and wife?" shrieked Girty. "Ain't I got a right to kill her ef I want? I'll do it, too, ef it adds to yer sufferin' a mite."

"Brutal wretch, she is dead already!" cried Harris, seeing that she did not move. "Raise her up, bring water and lave her face."

"Let her be," said Girty; "she deserves all she's got, an' more, too. I'll let ye know thet a woman kain't betray me, an' not hear of it. Now, then, to make an end of you, sense you like to die."

"What are you about to do?" said Harris.

"Ye see them knives; ther pooty hot, I reckins they'd be apt to burn ye a little if they teched ye. Now, es I said before, I like Black B'ar's idee of skinnin' ye; but I'll improve on his method—it shall be done with hot knives!"

"Monster!"

"I thort so," chuckled the scoundrel; "ye don't like the idee; jest so, it shall be done."

"What death do you expect to die, Simon Girty? You black-hearted fiend, do you know that the vengeance of God never sleeps?"

"God!" said Girty, casting a look at the sky. "It's long sense I hearn His name. My old mother used to pray. Curse you, what d'ye mean by makin' me think of her?"

"Even you had a good mother, then, Simon Girty? What if her spirit is looking down upon us now, witnessing your cruel deeds?"

"You lie!" roared Girty; "it kain't be; and yit they do say that spirits walk in the air. Eh!" looking apprehensively about him. "What the devil did ye say that fer? it makes a coward of me. Sperrits! Is that woman dead, Black B'ar?"

"Ugh!" said Little Black Bear, "not dead. Hit hard, brother. Take her scalp, eh?"

"No, friend Black B'ar, let her lie there. Now, let's to work. As I live, this young chap's hide comes off."

"I ask you not to do this deed," said Harris; "it will be something for you to remember in the coming days, that you treated a human being as such."

"No," yelled Girty, "if ye git on yer knees, I wouldn't let ye go. No, no; I know a trick worth two of that. Come, Black B'ar, begin."

The Indian advanced with a red-hot knife, and made an incision in the shoulder of the young hunter, at the base of the neck; the muscles shrunk, and the flesh seemed to shrivel up, under the incision. But Harris uttered no cry.

"Ugh!" said Little Black Bear again; "good blood. Big brave."

As he spoke, Girty stooped to take up a knife to begin his fiendish work, when three rifles cracked. Black Bear, with a bullet in his brain, fell dead at the feet of the destined victim. The savage next to him dropped with a groan. The ball aimed at Girty would doubtless have ended his wicked life forever, but it was fired as he stooped, and took effect in the arm of the Indian behind him. As Girty started up in surprise and terror, he saw something which did not decrease his uneasiness. Advancing from the thicket at a run, swinging their terrible rifles over their heads, came the big hunter, Nathan, and Massaquoit. Girty and the wounded Indian turned and ran for their lives.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

STILL ON THE TRAIL.

NATHAN and Massaquoit halted by the side of the young hunter, and cut his bonds hastily; but the big hunter never halted. He saw nothing but the flying Indian, and the two plunged into the woods together, the white man with firm-set teeth, and flashing eyes, running with dogged determination, and the savage going with the speed of despair.

"I don't calculate they've served you right well," said Nathan; "you'd better have vamoosed the ranche the way we did. You managed to get into trouble. Was that Girty?"

"Yes; I have a long account to settle with that wretch."

"Why; what'n thunder has he been doing to your back?"

"I have been flogged with hickories and pickled in brine," said Harris, grimly. "I have only one thing to repent; my rifle was leveled at the infamous wretch, and his wife's presence saved him. There she is; help her, I can't."

He sunk back in the chair, exhausted. Nathan ran into the house and a moment after emerged, bearing a gourd, which he filled at the spring, and, coming back, bathed the face of the poor woman, and washed the clotted blood from her wounds. She started up with a shudder.

"Simon, Simon, don't kill me!"

"Be quiet, my poor creature, nobody shall harm you," said Nathan, kindly.

"White woman good," said the Indian. "Hurt bad; rest do her much good."

"No, no, no!" said the woman, wildly; "there is no rest, no quiet for me. Good—I was good once; I loved my husband and trusted in him, until the serpent came. Why do the bells ring?"

"My poor woman," said Ned Harris, "there are no bells."

"My head swims—lights glance before my eyes; I know why the bells ring so loudly; there is to be a wedding—the young and true meet at the altar, and there exchange vows. I ought to know when the bells ring; so they rang at my wedding."

"My good woman," said Harris, "you are badly hurt; let me beg of you to go to the hut and lie down. Massaquoit, lead her in."

"He is red!" she shrieked

aloud; "he is bloody. Take him away!"

"Let me take her in, poor creature," said Nathan; "she won't be afraid of me."

"Yes, I will go with you," she said; "you have a rough face, but a gentle heart—you will be kind to me. Time was when Simon—even Simon Girty, was kind."

"I'll kill him yet," said Nathan; "I believe the devil helps him; he stooped just as I fired. Come along."

The woman went with him into the hut. He persuaded her to lie down on the rude pallet, and, with rough forest skill in surgery, made a bandage and bound up her bleeding head. Just as he did this, the big hunter returned. A fierce smile played over his face, and they knew that another Indian had fallen when he took a small book from his breast, and, with a pencil, put down another mark by the side of long rows, each one signifying an Indian's death.

"I swore when I stood by the side of my darling," said the big hunter, "that she should be terribly avenged. I have kept my word so far. I will keep it to the end. What is the matter with that woman? Have the red devils maltreated her?"

"No. One worse than any Indian did the work," said Harris, who had followed him in.

"Who?"

"Simon Girty."

The eyes of the hunter flashed fire. "Do you tell me that the man who ran from here but now was that execrable wretch?" he said. "Ah, if I had only known it! But, I saw only the savage running away. If I had known Girty, I would have left the chase even of an Indian to follow him. Did he strike the woman?"

"Yes. He beat her with his fist at first and then struck her down with a hatchet."

"For what?"

"She was pleading for my life, and he was jealous."

"Of her, poor woman?"

"Aye. Even of her."

"'Twas a bad blow," said the hunter, bending over her. "I wish she would open her eyes. There."

The woman had been lying back on the pillow, but her eyes flashed wide open, and she looked at him with a gaze from which he shrunk. He drew back and led Harris out of the hut.

"Did you look at her eye, boy?" he said.

"No; why should I?"

"She is mad."

"Mad?"

"Yes. The contusion of the brain is frightful. As soon as I saw her eye I knew she was mad."

"Will she recover?"

"Never! Do not think it for a moment. She will live, no doubt, but she never more will be sound in mind."

"It is terrible. She received the blow in trying to save my life."

"I am sorry for her," said the other; "but, sorrow will never bring back her lost wits. She seems to me a woman who has seen culture, and lived a life different from this, at some time."

"So I gathered from her conversation. It appears that Girty killed her husband when he was young, and she has been with him ever since."

"God will not suffer that bloody wretch to cumber the earth forever. Let us go on. We waste time."

"How did you come to save me?"

"Massaquoit followed you, and by his means we came hither in time. Let us away. Simon Girty will not rest until he is on our trail, with how many red devils it is impossible to say. Nathan, Massaquoit, let us go."

The Indian and Yankee came out of the hut.

"I hate dreffully to leave that woman," said Nathan. "She's badly hurt, I judge. How'd it happen?"

Harris related what had occurred.

"Strike a female with a hatchet!" roared the Yankee. "Dod rot his livin' picter. What does he mean? Now, look here; if I ever meet that consarned skunk, ef I don't make a hole in his hide, I hope I may be shot myself. That's all."

"We have talked long enough," said the big hunter. "Let us be on our way. As for this poor woman, we can do nothing with her. She is mad. And no man will harm a woman who is not in her right mind."

"Massaquoit is sad at heart," said the Indian, gravely. "The Shawnees have taken a wicked white man for their chief. There are good Indians and there are bad Indians; but, when a white man is bad, he is worse than a bad Indian."

"It is true, my friend Massaquoit. But, there are no good Shawnees. There is only one Indian man whom I will not kill, and only one woman. You are the man; Lealliwah is the woman. And why do I spare her? Five times I have had my rifle pointed at her heart, and as many times has something whispered, 'pause!'. I can not say what it is, but, I have determined that she shall escape."

"I am glad to hear it," said Harris. "The man who injures that girl will make an enemy of me. Let them look to it. You are too sanguinary, sir."

"I? You never saw what I saw. I had been married a few delicious months, and I found the wife whom I loved, with whom I was so happy, dead, dead! Oh God, the Ruler of all; Thou hast heard my vow. Witness also its redemption."

"Your wrongs are indeed great," said Harris; "but, others have suffered as well as you. I search for some one whom I love, and whom I will find, or die in trying."

"I believe you, young man. And you have the word of a man who never failed in a promise yet, that I will be by your side in every thing that relates to Constance Harding. There are others to be saved now, it seems."

"Yes. They have abducted Amy Boone and Edith Calloway."

"The heart of Massaquoit is sad," said the Indian. "He is sorry to see the red-men do such wrongs to their white brothers. If Massaquoit had his way, the red-men and the whites should live in peace. But, the time has come for work. Let us be on our way for the Valley of Cedars."

The night was yet dark. They knew that the morning could not be far off. Massaquoit took the lead, the big hunter marched next, Ned Harris followed, and the irrepressible Nathan brought up the rear. He kept up a running fire of commentaries as they proceeded.

"Judge, if we keep foolin' round much longer we'll get our ha'r raised," he declared. "How does it strike you, now?"

"I hope you are not afraid?" said the big hunter, sternly.

"Afraid! I calculate you orter be the the best judge of that."

"I believe you to be brave. But, why talk of the danger?"

"Dod rabbit it, can't you let a man talk? I'll tell you what it is; I was born talkin'. I was, by hokey. You'd better believe it, too. Why, darn my buttons, talkin' is as natural in our family as it is for a sow to drink butter-milk. My mother talked herself to death."

"That was sad," said Harris, laughing, in spite of his aching back.

"Sad? I guess it was! And that ain't all. She lived long enough to do the job for my father, his brother, and his brother's wife."

"In what manner?"

"Talked 'em into a quick consumption, every one of 'em," said Nathan, nodding, gravely. "I don't reckon I'd ever been here, if the old lady hadn't gone at herself in the manner described. Bet yer life she was a smart one. Talk?"

She'd talk a hole in an oak log in two minnits, by the clock. Now, I took after her a little. So don't blame me ef I talk, some."

"There are times when men ought to know how to rule their tongues."

"Don't I know that, big un?" said Nathan. "Now, don't be hard on me jest now. I've got to talk or bust; and as I don't want to go up jest yet, let me talk."

"The Indians may hear you."

"Let 'em I reckon I ain't afeared of no Indian that ever drewed breath. Now, see here; you know me, don't you? Did I ever flinch in a fight?"

"I have already said that I believe you to be a brave man," said the big hunter.

"Thank you. Oh, Jimini, I wonder how fur it is to the Valley of Cedars."

"If it were not for the canoe, you would be footsore before you reached the end of the journey," replied the hunter.

"Massaquoit knows the way," said the Indian. "The big river flows by it, so that our path shall be by water."

"It is fortunate," said Harris, "that we have a canoe. Where is it hidden?"

"Massaquoit knows. It is near at hand."

Indeed, the murmur of the river sounded pleasantly in their ears as they came forward. They reached the stream's bank, and from a mass of rubbish beside a fallen log, the big hunter and Massaquoit exhumed a large canoe, capable of carrying the four men easily. There were four paddles in the boat, and they set to work at once, and were soon spinning down the stream, propelled by the powerful arms of the adventurers. The cabin of Girty was soon left miles in the rear; then they breathed more freely. As morning came, they drew the canoe under the shelter of the heavy growth of bushes which overhung the river, and there lay secure from observation.

"Now that we are at rest," said Harris, "I wish some one would look at my back. It burns as if living coals had been laid upon it."

"Massaquoit will help you, if any one can," said the big hunter. "Look at the boy's back, will you?"

Massaquoit assisted Harris in removing the hunting-shirt which adhered to the raw flesh, and revealed the bloody work of Girty. Nathan uttered a cry of horror.

"Mebbe I won't give that devil particular goss when I git a lick at him," said Nathan. "I say, perhaps. But, I rather guess I will. Oh, darn an' blast a man that kin have the heart to maltreat a feller critter that way. Looks bad, don't it, Massy?"

"Got bad lickin'," said the Indian, gravely. "Never mind. Massaquoit cure him. You stay here; keep very quiet."

The Indian left the canoe and went into the woods. He was gone nearly a quarter of an hour. When he returned he bore in his hands a number of leaves from plants of different kinds, which he proceeded to bruise into a sort of poultice. This was spread upon a piece of soft buckskin and laid upon the back of Harris. At the first touch, he felt the influence of the potent herbs. A sensation of rest and comfort came over his wounded back, and he knew that Massaquoit understood his business.

"How feel now, brother?" said the Indian. "Good, eh?"

"The sensation is delightful. I thank you, Massaquoit."

"No thanks. Catch Girty some day, make something for his back not feel so good, eh? You put it on?"

"I'll do it. Did you see any Indian signs while you were out?"

"Plenty, plenty. Good many times I see Indian sign."

"Where did they go?"

"Some go dis way; some go dat

way. Go everywhere; look for scalps."

"Then the route will be full of danger," said the big hunter. "It behooves us to be on our guard."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE WARNING.

KEEPING in the shadow of the banks, and moving forward with great caution, the canoe advanced through the day. The dark foliage on every hand, the silent river, the beautiful fields, formed a pleasant picture. Ned Harris had an eye for the beautiful in nature. His soul was of such a mold that he could take delight in these things. Even the heart of Massaquoit felt the influence. But the face of the big hunter never changed, and Nathan looked at the scenery merely in the light of dollars and cents.

"Have you any such scenery in the east, friend Nathan?" asked Harris.

"Wal, I can't say that we have. I'll tell you what it is, Ned; our kentry ain't so pooty to look at, but we've made away with the pizon reptiles that infested the sile, so that we kin live in peace. It's a rough sile in the east, I allow, but thar ain't no Injins."

"Where are they?" said Massaquoit. "There was a time when great tribes dwelt by the sea. Where are the Pequods and Wampamoags? Where the Delawares and Nephews? Have they any longer a place and a name?"

"I rather think not! They kinder leaked out, little by little, till hardly a shoot of the old stem remains. I'm thinkin' they had a good deal to do with their own downfall."

"Had the white man nothing to do with the work?" said Massaquoit, impressively laying a finger upon the arm of the Yankee.

"I won't deny but he had," said Nathan. "You see Injins ain't got the ways of the whites. They ain't so cute, so to speak. They don't really get the way of handlin' powder an' ball, an' they ain't got no invention. Now, when a white man gits in a pizon diffikilty, an' ain't got no way ready to git out of it, he makes up a way. An Injin follers the same old road, an' if he's turned out of that road, he don't know what to do."

"My brother is right, the Indians are very simple, but, they are as the great master of life made them. Is it right, then, for our white brothers to come among us, with guns and fire-water, to steal away our hearts and our lives?"

"I judge not," said Nathan. "But, what I think is this: An Injin ain't no call to drink unless he has a mind to it."

"Listen, my brother," said Massaquoit. "I am the friend of the white man. I love them, and because I love them, I can not refuse to see their faults. The Indian did not know that there was such a thing as strong water, until our white brothers came, and, when they had tasted it, they were like men bitten by a rattlesnake. Poison spread itself through their veins, and lo! they are undone. Step by step I see them go backward. But they can not help themselves; the poison is in their veins."

"I do not deny that the Indians have great wrongs, Massaquoit," said Harris. "But us settlers in Kentucky have come among the Shawnees, wishing to live at peace with them. They give us no rest. Our houses are burned, our women made captive, our children are killed, before we have raised a hand against the tribe."

"That is because the chiefs say: 'Behold our great tribes in the east. Wherever a white man's foot is placed, they melt away, like snow under the sunrays. Let us drive them out, before we share their fate.'"

"It will only end in one way," said Harris; "white men must conquer."

"Massaquoit is not a fool. He knew this long ago, and he be-

came a friend of the white man. Why is the nation of the Iroquois the strongest of the east? Because they do not take up the hatchet against their white neighbors."

"Silence," said the big hunter. "I hear footsteps."

A death-like stillness fell upon the scene. The big hunter silently left the bivouac, with a drawn knife in his hand. A slight scuffle was heard, ere long, and when he returned he was leading by the hand the beautiful Indian girl, Lealliwah.

Harris uttered a low cry of admiration. She seemed more beautiful now than ever before. A flush stole into her dusky face as she saw the young hunter.

"Lealliwah!" he cried. "How came you here?"

"The woods are wide," said Lealliwah. "Who shall say to me, 'go here, or go there.' I come and go as I will."

"Will the queen of the Shawnee maidens listen to the words of the white man?" he said, adopting the style of conversation to which he knew she had been accustomed. "Will she listen to the man who is willing to lay down his life for her sake?"

"Let the white hunter speak. Lealliwah is ready to listen."

"Has Lealliwah been to the Valley of Cedars since I saw her at the Indian village?"

"My brother ran away," said the Indian maiden, smiling. "Lealliwah was very glad, for the Indians would have burned him. But, what does the white man know of the Valley of Cedars?"

"Let the maiden answer my question."

"Lealliwah has indeed been to the Valley of Cedars."

"Then you have seen the maiden whom they call Constance?"

"Constance!" cried the big hunter. "What does she know about Constance? I tell you, the child is dead. She must be dead. But, let the girl speak."

Ned glanced at the big hunter in surprise. Large beads of sweat had started out upon his brow. His face worked like that of a man enduring great physical agony.

"Constance!" said Lealliwah.

"I can not tell. That name, that name! Why does it ring in my ears like the music of a forgotten song? I can not understand. I told you before, there is a maiden at the Valley of Cedars whose name sounds like that. And yet, when they speak her name, it does not affect me as it does when you speak it."

"Is the maiden white as snow yet at the valley?" asked Ned.

"Yes."

"Then I must find her. Say, maiden: Is your heart all Indian? If we go among your people, desiring to shed no blood, but merely to save from captivity one we love, will you betray us?"

"Lealliwah could not do that. Her heart is not as warm to her people as it should be. When Telonga comes to her, and whispers words of love in her ear, she does not love to hear them as she used to do. Something has come between her and his heart."

"Then you no longer love the chief?" said Harris, eagerly.

"What is my brother thinking of?" said the Indian girl, proudly. "Has he forgotten what he said to me at the village? When he spoke to me he told me that the maiden with the name which makes me think of the days when I was a little child, was to have been his wife, and that he loved her. Why should he dare to speak and look at the Indian girl in that way, if this is true?"

"But, I have it from your own lips that you no longer love the chief."

"I did not say that I no longer loved the chief. But, something has come between my heart and his, like a cloud before the sun. How can I tell what this is? The sun will some day drive away the cloud."

"You are too beautiful to be the wife of a savage," said Harris,

speaking her language with a glibness which surprised himself. "You were born for something better, something higher."

"Telonga is a great chief," said the girl, quickly, and with a touch of anger in her tones.

"But he is a savage."

"So am I. No good has ever come of one of your blood mating with the children of the tribes. Let not the white man speak against Telonga, or he will make Lealliwah angry."

"Let the Queen of the Woods forget that I have spoken so to her. Let her remember that she is very beautiful, and I am young, and that young blood is hot."

Something in her face told the young man that she was not so terribly offended, after all.

"Then my white brother must not speak so to her any more," said she, "or she will be very angry. Lealliwah is his friend—she will always be his friend. But, let him go not to the Valley of Cedars. There are dangers in the path of which you know nothing. The Shawnees scent blood in the air. Telonga has sworn to have your scalp."

"Why is he so furious against me?"

A smile and blush were the answer.

"Because I spoke to you in the village?" asked Ned.

She nodded and smiled again.

"Ah ha! Then let the Indian beware of me!"

"My brother does not think what he says. Telonga is a great chief. He is very brave in battle. He has taken many scalps."

"Have you asked her where Constance is?" demanded the big hunter. "You are losing time in talk. Ask her, and quickly."

"We were speaking of Constance," said Ned, looking disconcerted. "Where is she?"

"I saw her at the Valley of Cedars four suns ago. Go not near it. When warriors have taken a prisoner, and he escapes, they are very angry with him when he falls again into their hands. My brothers must be very careful. Promise me that you will not go to the valley."

"I can not do that," said Ned. "To find Constance has been the object of my life. When that life ends, and then only, the search ends. If they have not killed her, I will find her."

"The white man is brave," said the girl, looking at him with a kindling eye. "He deserves to find the girl he loves. Telonga is a great chief, but he would not go so far to find Lealliwah, if she were stolen away."

"What does she say?" again asked the big hunter.

"She says that the girl she takes for Constance is still at the Valley of Cedars."

"That is good news. Though it may not be the one we seek, yet it is some poor girl who is doomed to a fate worse than death, unless we rescue her. Let us push on. What is to be done with this girl?"

"Let her go free."

"Impossible. She will be sure to betray us."

"She will not," said Harris, hotly. "I will stake my life on her truth."

"Has she promised not to betray us, then?" said the big hunter.

"She shall do it," said Harris; and you shall see her face when she makes the promise again to you, as she has done it to me. Lealliwah, look upon these men. Do you know any one?"

"Massaquoit comes from the shores of the great water, Ontario," said the girl; "he is well known in the villages of the Shawnees."

"Do you know the others?"

"I have heard of the terrible big hunter of the Kentucky," responded the girl, "and I see him now. He has killed many of my people; but, will you speak a few words in his ear; you shall repeat them for me."

"What can she have to say to

me," queried the hunter, when the request was made known. "Why should she speak?"

"Will you hear her?"

"I can not help myself; there is something in her face which I can not resist."

"Big hunter," said the girl, in a musical voice, which sounded like the ringing of a silver bell, "you have suffered great wrongs at the hands of the Shawnees. Before that time, you were kind to them when they came to your house; but when the sorrow came you went mad."

The hunter bowed his head.

"You made a vow, which was not right in the eyes of the Great Spirit; you said you would not spare man, woman, or child with Indian blood in its veins."

"It is true. Did they spare my sweet lambs? Girl, do not drive me mad by the recollection of that sad time; it is hard enough to bear when I am alone with my thoughts."

"You have done wrong," said Lealliwah; "a great warrior avenges a wrong upon those who do the deed. What have the women of the Shawnees and the little children, done to wrong you? If you have lost a dear one, why rob others of those they love as dearly?"

"I never killed any one but warriors. Providence has ordained it that I should never have it in my power to take away the life of a woman or child except yours, and your life I dare not take."

"That is well. Then, if you must slay, promise me that only warriors shall feel the power of your rifle, and that the innocent shall go by unharmed."

To the surprise of every one the man bowed his head and made the promise.

"Lealliwah is glad," said the girl. "If warriors fall, it is the fate of war; but women and children, who can not fight, should go safely on their way. Can Lealliwah go now?"

"Do you promise not to betray us?"

"Lealliwah will be true?"

"Then go. You have done a good work in me to-night; I am not the man I was."

With a smile Lealliwah bounded into the woods, and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE INDIAN VILLAGE.

"You look at me strangely," said the big hunter; "you can not understand how it is that I have made this promise, and made it to an Indian girl. I am as much at fault as you; I only know that her influence over me is such that I feel I can not resist it. My hate of the red race remains, yet I own to a deference toward Lealliwah which both pains and pleases me."

This was a long speech for the usually taciturn and somewhat sullen man, whose life was a mystery even to himself.

"Perhaps you are in love with her, and want to cut out Telonga and Ned," remarked the Yankee, carelessly.

The big hunter made a sudden bound, and laid an iron hand upon the throat of the speaker, who turned pale as death. The fit of anger left the strange man as quickly as it came, and his arm dropped to his side.

"While you live, never make a speech of that kind again, Nathan; you very nearly tempted me to do you an injury; I should have done it if my senses had not come back to me in time."

"I beg pardon, governor," said Nathan, putting his hand up to his throat, in which there was an uncomfortable sensation. "I didn't think you'd rile up like that—I didn't, by gravy. I shan't joke with you again."

"I am no jester, Nathan; I thought you knew that. Let us start forward."

"Not go yet," said Massaquoit; "stay here. Ned and I go to village over dere."

"Is there a village near at hand?"

"Yes," said Massaquoit, "big village, good many people. Go dere, find girl, mebbe. Don't t'ink perhaps Lealliwah know all 'bout white pris'ner."

"Massaquoit is right. We must search every large village on the route. Won't Ned need a little painting before you go?"

"Got paint here," said Massaquoit, opening his pouch; "always ready."

By the aid of the material he had, the runner quickly transformed Ned into an Indian, grotesquely painted.

"I medicine-man, dis time," said Massaquoit. "You my man. Go wid me. See now. Me tell you what to do."

In as few words as possible, the runner made Ned acquainted with his plans. Being quick to learn, he readily took the lesson to heart, and soon had it at his finger-ends. Massaquoit put on a sort of helmet, or pointed cap, much worn by medicine-men, and started toward the Indian town, not a mile away, Harris following in his wake. They left the woods behind, and came out upon the slope of the hill, at the foot of which the village nestled by the river-side, a picturesque scene indeed. The wigwams were planted out in rows, leaving a large square in the center. The entire collection numbered perhaps five hundred lodges, being one of the largest of the Indian towns.

"Now remember," said Massaquoit. "Do as I told you. All know me here."

He advanced boldly. Immediately some of the Shawnees lounging about in the square and alleys saw him, and came running toward him, some bearing weapons in their hands. But, the moment they recognized him, all fell back in the greatest respect. The profession of medicine-man is as sacred as that of the herald in ancient times.

As they entered the village, Ned, according to instructions, dancing and performing uncouth antics in the rear, at the same time keeping a sharp lookout among the circle of dark faces on every hand. He saw at a glance that the village was rather barren of warriors. Most of them were on the war-path. An old chief, with snow-white hair falling on his shoulders, advanced to meet them.

"My son is very great medicine," said he. "Why has he now come to the Shawnee village? We have looked for him a long time."

"The medicine-man must go where the Great Spirit calls him," said Massaquoit. "How has it been with my father? His hair is white as snow, but his limbs are strong."

"Maonah is a broken pine," said the old chief. "There is life in his roots, but he is dead at the top. Let my son come forward, until a greater chief greets him. Telonga is here."

Ned, although he never ceased his antics, felt a pang very akin to fear at this intelligence. But, to do him justice, this fear was not for himself, but for his mission. If he was ever detected, farewell his hope of ever finding Constance Harding!

The old chief led the way to the grand square. There, standing near a great fire which had been built in the center, they saw Telonga. The face of the chief was stern. For several months, the settlers had been getting the better of his men in their various encounters, and he was very angry. The ambition of this man was to drive the white men, whom he hated so intensely, from the soil of Kentucky. But, he saw to his dismay that the annihilation of block-houses and trading-posts, and even settlements, did not deter the settlers from pushing their posts still further west and north. He saw, in spite of all he could do, his tribe decreasing day by day, with no hope of remedying

the evil. The demon whom he had feared was gradually finding its way into the tribe—the love of strong drink. At the sight of his somber face, Massaquoit gave a signal to Ned, and he dropped face downward on the sod, and rolled himself up in a heap.

"Massaquoit is welcome, if he comes as a friend," said Telonga. "But, he has been a friend of the white men. Who is this?"

"Touch him not," said Massaquoit. "The hand of the Great Spirit is on him. He is mad."

Telonga uttered a guttural exclamation of pity, and then did not look at him again. Ned lay coiled up at the feet of Massaquoit, watching every movement of his enemies with a wary eye. He saw that every thing was in readiness for a council. Skins had been spread about the fire, and the women and children, together with the warriors who had been left in the village, already formed a deep circle about them.

"What is this?" said Massaquoit. "Do the chiefs meet in council?"

"Yes," said Telonga. "I am glad my brother has come. He can tell us what we ought to do. The white men win. The Indians can not stay them. Foot by foot they are driving us away from our pleasant places, and soon the deer will come no more to the licks when they want drink, because they fear the rifles of the white men."

"What would you have me do?" demanded Massaquoit.

"I would have you cry aloud to the Great Spirit, that he may put strength into our arms, to drive out the long-knives from among us."

"The Great Spirit will not always be entreated," said Massaquoit.

"When should his children come to him, except in their need," said the chief. "Our warriors grow faint in battle. They are slain often, and not many of the white men fall."

"Massaquoit will do what he can," said the runner. "Let Telonga be sure of that."

"It is well," said Telonga. "When the chiefs come, go into the circle, and call upon the Great Spirit. We will see if he is angry with us."

At this moment there was a commotion in the lodges, and six men, the heads of the village of that section, came out into the open space. All greeted Massaquoit by a stately salutation, and took seats upon the skins. Massaquoit was assigned a place near Telonga, and the council commenced. All around them gathered a circle of grim faces mingled with those of the women and children, looking on with the pleasure which they always take in any thing out of the ordinary routine of everyday life. The comely faces of the women lighted up with a smile, as some favored chief or brave took his place in the circle. But, while the center of admiration was Telonga, the Great Elk, all looked with awe upon the set face of Massaquoit, who, in his character of medicine-man, or prophet, was regarded as a superior being, to whom was given the power of looking into the future, and of penetrating the secrets which lie beyond the power of ordinary mortals.

"Listen," said Telonga. "Chiefs and warriors, you see before you Massaquoit, the Mohawk, who will tell you what you ought to do. Arise then, great prophet, and we will attend to thy words."

"Aleno!" cried Massaquoit, in a voice of thunder. "Come!"

This was the name by which he had chosen to designate Ned Harris. Bounding suddenly to his feet, he pushed aside the savages who impeded his course, and stood in the center of the ring, beside the blazing fire. The foam was dropping from his lips, and his glaring eyes ran round the dark circle with an unmeaning stare.

"See," said Massaquoit; "here

stands one who has felt the hand of the Manitou. Let all men respect him."

A murmur ran through the assembled group. Indians would as soon think of digging up the bones of their fathers, as to lay the weight of a finger in anger upon an insane or foolish person.

"Aleno," said Massaquoit, in the same thundering base, "produce the holy pouch."

From the folds of his hunting-shirt Ned took out the pouch which had been entrusted to his care by the runner, and handed it to him. As soon as he had taken it, obedient to the sign, he fell at the feet of Massaquoit, and coiled himself up as before. In the bag Massaquoit, who was a man of great experience in these matters, had a number of contrivances for inspiring awe in the simple minds of the savages. First he took out a little oblong box of bark, which he laid upon the ground. Then, lighting a pine torch which lay near, he whirled it over his head, and waved it slowly over the box, managing to touch it in the operation. Instantly there was a tremendous report, and a stream of flame leaped upward. The box was filled with powder, and he had managed to light a small piece of paper communicating with the contents. Though one of the simplest tricks imaginable, it imposed upon the credulous savages, who fell back in some alarm, while the women fled, shrieking, though curiosity brought them back again when they found that no one was hurt. Massaquoit crossed his face with his hands and dropped to the ground, mumbling a strange jumble of words, intelligible to no one. Then he sprang up, and, rocking his body to and fro, began to chant in deep, awe-inspiring voice:

"Manitou, Manitou,
Great Father, hear me.
I call aloud, that thy ears may be open;
Listen to the voice of thy child.
Thou hast seen the light,
Thou hast spoken aloud.
Thy voice is heard by the Shawnee.
Telonga is here; he calls thee!
Elinipisco is here; he calls thee!
Massaquoit would hear thy voice again."

He paused, and taking a number of small packages, about the size of the ordinary torpedo, from the pouch, he flung them into the flames. A dozen reports were heard, and the brands were scattered.

"The Manitou hears," said Massaquoit. "What would the chiefs know?"

"Demand of him, whether the Shawnees will succeed in their battles against the whites," said Telonga.

"Listen," said Massaquoit, producing five packages, somewhat larger than the last used, but similar in appearance. "When I cast these into the flames, if you hear the voice of the Spirit, you will know whether you are to stand or to fall."

All looked on in speechless anxiety, while the speaker cast one of the packages into the flames. They seized upon it greedily, and though no noise was heard, it was speedily consumed. A look of fear was seen upon the face of every one present, except that of Telonga. His was a nature to defy even the Great Spirit himself.

"Demand of him, whether we must be friends with the white men."

Massaquoit flung another package into the fire. A report, nearly as loud as that which had destroyed the box, immediately followed. A cry of terror broke from the gaping crowd.

"It is false!" cried Telonga, angrily. "A lying Spirit has taken the place of the Great Manitou. Listen, sons of the Shawnees! Shall we make friends with those who come among us with poisons, and who would rob us of the land we love, and even steal away the graves of our fathers? What is Kantuckee? Is it not the soil where the Shawnee and the Chickasaw, for many years, have killed game and fought each other.

And shall we give it up to strangers? The Great Spirit created it for us to kill our game upon, and no lying Spirit shall turn us from the land."

"Let Telonga be silent," said Massaquoit. "The mouth of the prophet is opened, and the Great Spirit shall fill it with words of fire. If the Shawnees are strong, is not the white man stronger? Listen to what the Great Spirit speaks. 'Be friends with the white man, and you shall still be great, like the Six Nations of the lakes.' Behold the Tuscaroras. They fought with the white men, and they were driven from their homes and went to dwell with the Iroquois of the lakes, and now they are a great nation, while those who fought the white man are gone from the face of the earth."

"Let dogs and cowards be friends of the white man. Telonga will never be their slave."

"Is Massaquoit a slave? Are the Mohawks slaves? They are friends of the white man."

"Massaquoit has listened too long to the smooth tongue of Sir William," replied Telonga. "The white man has sung in his ear like a bird. While the Mohawks and Oneidas, the Senecas and Cayugas, the Onondagas and Tuscaroras fight for the white man, and drink their strong water, they will be safe. But, when there are no more wars to fight, they will fall under the hand of the destroyer."

"Then Massaquoit will go," said the wily Mohawk, who was by this time satisfied that the object of their search was not in the village. "He will go to a tribe who honor the Great Spirit."

"Let Massaquoit rest," said Telonga, "and listen to the council of warriors who have never bowed the knee unto the white man."

"Massaquoit must go." "Not so. Let my brother stay. Our brother Girty will soon be here."

Massaquoit had good reasons for not wishing to see his "brother Girty," and insisted upon leaving. Telonga pressed him to remain, but he would not, and left the village. As they passed out, they met Lealliwah coming in. No one was near, and she stopped and spoke to them.

"Go quickly," she said. "Girty is near at hand."

Massaquoit took the hint and hurried away. In a few moments the canoe had passed the village which was concealed from the view of those in the boat by the intervening hills, and was on the way down-stream. Lealliwah joined the group about the council-fire, happy in the consciousness that the white men would soon be out of reach of pursuit.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MAD ELIZA.

THE party had hardly been gone an hour when Simon Girty rode into the village, accompanied by the Indian who had been with him in the torture of Ned Harris. The naturally forbidding countenance of Girty was black with passion, and Telonga saw at a glance that something had happened to make him furiously angry.

"What has been done to my brother Girty?" said the chief. "He is angry. Does he scent blood in the air?"

"Blood!" said Girty. "It shall flow like a river! What? Kin a sneakin' thief come into a man's cabin while he's gone, and talk to his wife till she forgits she has a husband? I'll have his blood."

"Where is Little Black Bear?" demanded the chief. "Where is Sandoval? Why does Achinga bleed? Have my brothers met the enemy?"

In as few words as possible the renegade detailed the events of the night at and around his cabin. The countenance of the chief darkened as he heard the villain speak of Ned Harris.

"Let my brother listen to me," said he. "This young man was once our prisoner. He looked with eyes of love upon the face of Lealliwah. Telonga will meet him some day, and when they do meet, one of the two shall die. Telonga has sworn it."

"An' Simon Girty swears it too. Now understand me, chief. I don't bar no man in his revenge. If you git him first, down he goes. If I git him, I'll murder him by inches. Oh, to think that I should have hed him in my hands, an' waited so long before I give it to him! I orter 'a lost him, cuss me for a fool. I might 'a killed him."

As they looked at each other, a strange, wild cry broke out on the clear air of the evening, and they heard the clatter of horses' feet. Both looked back in surprise, and Simon uttered a cry of rage as he saw who came. It was his wife, with the bandage still about her head, stained with blood, which oozed through it and beneath it, and ran down her pale cheek. In one hand she held a knife, with which she goaded on the frightened horse. As she dashed up to the council-fire, the crowd parted right and left, and the panting beast halted, trembling in every limb, close to the renegade. He uttered an appalling oath.

"Eliza, by—"

"Swear not," said the woman. "This is the anniversary of my wedding-day. How the birds sung then! The very trees seemed to blossom more beautifully, because I was happy. I am happy again to-day."

"Air ye mad?" hissed Simon.

"Mad," said the woman, in a wandering way, putting her hand to her head. "Mad? I never thought. My head aches." She put up her hand, and took it down, covered with blood. A shrill, half-pleased, half-scared cry broke from her.

"Blood?" she said. "Blood? How came it here? I saw it once before, when he died. Simon Girty killed him. Simon, do you never think that, though the vengeance of God is sometimes slow, it is always sure? You will have cause to remember it some day; and, when you are dead, I will make me a gown red as blood, and wear it at your burial. There is a young man in the woods, looking for his sweetheart. Perhaps he will find her. If he knew what I knew, he wouldn't go so far. I know where he goes to search for her, but I won't tell you. Ha, ha, ha!"

Her weird, unearthly laughter rang out again on the still air.

"Eliza," said Simon, hoarsely, "do you want me to kill you?"

"Do you want more blood, my pet? No, no; there is blood enough and to spare. My head is not very clear to-day. But, I don't think I have been so happy since the day you talked to me in the orchard. Why did you come? I was happy before. The birds sung no more after that, Simon. You stopped them. You could stop any music, Simon."

He raised his hand to strike her, but Telonga laid his hand on his arm, and kept back the descending blow.

"My brother Girty forgets," he said. "The Indians do not suffer a wrong to be done to one whose mind is gone. She is mad."

"I'll brain her," roared Girty. "Ef it had not been for her, Ned Harris couldn't 'a got away. She kep' me back."

"Then my brother struck her. That was right. A wicked wife deserves to be punished. I am glad my brother taught her not to come in the way of a chief. But, now it is done and she no longer knows what she does. Simon must do her no harm."

"Then let her go away," he replied, "or I will kill her."

"My brother Girty is mad. He has been badly treated. When he feels better, he will not wish to do harm to this poor woman. Let her stay in the village, if my brother is tired of her. There

will always be a hand to give her food, because she is the wife of Girty, and because he loved her."

"Was he going to strike me?" asked the madwoman, dismounting quickly. "He ought not to strike me. It is unjust. I gave up all for him, before my head felt so light and strange. Did your head ever feel like this, chief?"

She caused her hands to revolve quickly about each other, indicating the confusion in her brain.

"Let my sister go into the lodge and rest," said the chief, kindly. "She is tired."

"Rest? No rest! I shall never have any rest except when I die! and, when the time comes, I shall lie down under the trees, and the little birds shall come and cover me with leaves. Then I shall be happy again, and, in the world to come, there will be no wars. There the weary are forever at rest."

"Git away," said the renegade, angrily. "Chief, are we to stand all day to listen to her palaver? It ain't the way to lick the long-knives."

"My sister must go away," said the chief, kindly. "Lealliwah, lead her to your lodge."

The girl came forward and took the hand of the poor crazed creature. At the touch of that soft hand, the poor woman turned a look of extreme bewilderment upon the beautiful face upturned to hers, as if it awakened strange memories, even in that crazed brain.

"Will you come?" said the Indian girl, softly. "You are hurt. Let me tend you."

"Yes, I will go with you, for you speak sweetly, and your eyes are like an angels. But, what have I to do with them? Girl, I once was like you, a pure woman; then I was a wife, first true, then false."

"Do not think of it any more," said Lealliwah. "Let me lead you to the lodge."

Eliza obeyed the touch of that gentle hand, and was led into the tent, where Lealliwah washed the clotted blood from her wounds, and bound a new bandage about her head. Eliza sat quietly during the operation, only showing by a low moaning that she felt pain.

"How was this done?" asked Lealliwah.

"The blood?"

"Yes."

"Simon did that. I used to love him. But he lifts his hand against those who do him good. A young man came to the cabin and asked for food and shelter. He was looking for his sweetheart."

"Was he tall as the young pine, with eyes of fire, and a foot as swift as the red deer?" asked Lealliwah.

"Yes. He made me think of the time when Simon was not with me. It was so far back I can not well remember. Ah, my head! my head!"

"And did Girty strike you?"

"Yes."

"With a hatchet?"

"Yes; and, since then, my brain whirls. I can not understand any thing. I want to be in the woods. I want to find the young man, and tell him where to find his sweetheart. I know."

"You! Where is she?"

"Ha, ha, ha! As if I would tell! I must follow the young man. I heard them talk. He is going to the Valley of Cedars, is he? As if he would find her there! But, they shall not go. I will follow. I will tell them what they ought to do."

"Where is this girl white as snow," said Lealliwah—"the one he seeks? I do not like her."

The mad woman fairly screamed with laughter.

"Never mind. I will make it right. He shall find her. He shall be happy. Simon will be very angry, but what do I care for that? I used to care, for I was afraid of him. I am not afraid of him now."

"He is a dog," said Lealliwah, angrily. "I hope he will be killed. If he strikes you again, I will kill him, myself."

"You? Simon is strong. When I was afraid of Simon he could turn me about between his thumb and finger. I don't care for him any more. I am going to find the boy with the black eyes, and help him to find his sweetheart. Will you be glad when I find her?"

"Yes," said Lealliwah. "He will be happy then, but, he will go away, and I shall never see his face again. He speaks kindly to Lealliwah, and his words make her blush. I wish he would go away, and then, when he is gone, I wish he would come back again."

This innocent confession brought a second peal of laughter from Eliza.

"You shall see him again. Would you like to go away, and never again see the village? To live among people who speak to each other softly, whose men work in the fields, while the women stay in the lodge?"

The face of Lealliwah showed a deep interest. "The white men are very kind to their women," she said. "If the Indians were so, we should love the braves better."

"Would you like a life like that?"

"Why do you ask me? I am an Indian. When the time comes, I must go into the lodge of Telonga."

"I won't let you," said Eliza. "I'll tell you something. No, I won't! Some day you will know all about it."

"Tell me now," pleaded Lealliwah, with womanly curiosity, intensely excited. "You must not keep it from me. I love you. You will speak to me; you will tell me what you mean."

"No," said Eliza, with a cunning look. "You shall not know any thing about it now. I am going to tell you some day. Don't ask me. I know something. Won't Simon and Telonga rave! They don't think I know. I used to know it before my head got so light."

"Tell me now," said Lealliwah.

"You do not love me. You say things, and then you keep me in suspense. You are not kind to me."

"I do love you, for you washed my wounds and spoke to me softly."

"Then you will tell me."

"No."

"Then I shall be angry."

"I will not tell you now."

Lealliwah pouted and turned away her head. They were sitting in a little curtained recess where Lealliwah slept, and did not see that a part of the curtain was thrust aside, and that the dark, forbidding face of Simon Girty looked in.

"Ain't afraid of me now, eh? We'll see about that," were his thoughts.

"Do not be angry. My brain is not right, or I should not have spoken. But, I will tell you some day."

"Yer will, will ye, ye mad-brained loon," muttered Girty. "Not if I kin git a chance to knife ye. Ye won't live to see another sun rise."

Muttering imprecations on the head of the unfortunate woman, and upon that of Lealliwah, whom he fervently hated, he withdrew and returned to the council-fire, which he had left on some pretext. The council ended, as did all such meetings where Telonga and Girty presided, in a determination at all hazards, to drive out the encroaching white men. By ten o'clock the village was silent, and at that hour, Simon Girty left his lodge with stealthy steps and moved toward that of Lealliwah. He was only partially clothed, and carried in his hand a murderous-looking knife. The brute had determined to kill Eliza. He knew that she had a secret which it was his interest to conceal, and in her madness she would be sure to betray

him. There was nothing for it but to kill her. Dead women, as well as dead men, he argued, tell no tales.

With him, to meditate such a deed was to perform it. He was so constituted that murder was not repulsive. His guilty soul, steeped in crime, could not comprehend the enormity of his guilt. His only thought was: this woman has placed herself in my way. To a man less guilty the thought must have come home, this woman has loved me. For me she gave up all, her good name, a happy home, every thing, and has been through all true as the steel to the scabbard. No such thought as this entered the brain of Girty, if he thought at all. His impulses were those of a brute.

Crawling forward, prone, like snake, with his white teeth glistering like those of a panther, he pushed aside the lodge-curtain and looked in. The scene before him might have made any man pause. There lay Lealliwah, one wounded arm thrown over the covering of bear-skin, showing her shoulder and her beautiful neck, her lips, just parted by their breathing, her teeth, white and even as pearls, just disclosed.

"I'd like to pay the little devil for her scorn of me," he muttered. "'Twould sarve her right. But I'd only make an enemy of Telonga."

On another couch of skins within the recess where Lealliwah usually slept, lay something which he supposed was the victim of whom he was in search. The moonlight, streaming in through the curtain, directed his course. As he crawled forward, and passed Lealliwah, she started, and raised her head. He thought she had awakened, and fell to the ground waiting for events. But she only threw her arm over her head and was silent. She had not awakened but was dreaming of one whom Telonga would have hated with greater intensity than ever, if he had known the object of her dreams. Simon grinned savagely as he heard the name she whispered in her dreams.

"Him, eh? That's rich, that is! But, I wouldn't dare to tell Telonga, 'cause I couldn't tell him whar I heard it. Now for my dear!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FOILED.

A DEATHLIKE stillness reigned in the lodge. The villain, strangely for him, felt a sense of oppression, and a choking in his throat, as he thought of doing murder in the presence of so much youth and beauty. For some moments he lay panting, irresolute as to the course he ought to take; but his brutal instincts eventually got the mastery, and he crawled toward the bed upon which lay the victim. He could just make out the outline of her form in the obscurity of the place, and raising the knife above his head, he plunged it again and again into the sleeping form. Not a cry, not a moan, was heard.

"The fust blow went home, I reckon," thought the guilty wretch. One thing's tol'able sartin. She won't blab."

He pulled the covering aside expecting to see a bloody corpse. What was it that caused him to spring to his feet and glide from the lodge, and then wake the echoes by his angry cries? All was in confusion. Braves, half-dressed, and armed with any weapon they could pick up in the excitement of the moment, crowded out of the lodges. Women, with disheveled hair, children half naked, uttering cries of alarm. Telonga was out among the first.

"My wife is gone," shouted Girty. "Come with me."

"Telonga followed him into the lodge of Lealliwah, and into the inner space where Eliza should have rested. There lay a bearskin, rolled into something like resemblance of a human form, pierced

in half a dozen places by the knife of Girty. The cunning of the madwoman showed itself in the ruse. Conscious that Lealliwah might wake and look toward her sleeping-place, she had rolled up the skin and laid it under the covering. It had served another purpose.

Telonga turned, and looked the renegade in the face. There was something in his eye which Girty did not like.

"Listen, my brother Girty. You knew of this before. How did you find that she was gone?"

Girty betrayed confusion.

"My brother has been here?"

"Wal, chief—"

"When one warrior asks another a question, it is better for him to answer it without wasting time. My brother can say yes or no."

"Yes, then."

"My brother has been here. What did he come for?"

"I came to kill her."

"Why?"

"Because she was goin' to reveal a secret you nor I don't want told."

"And what was the secret? I have none."

Girty stooped, and whispered in his ear. Telonga stared at him a moment in anger and amazement, and then took his arm and led him from the lodge. Lealliwah, who had thrown a blanket over herself and risen on their entrance, went into the curtained recess and drew the curtain after her. When they were in the open air, and apart from others, Telonga again spoke.

"Let me understand, my brother. Did she say that she would tell this to the long-knife, whom they call Harris?"

"Yes."

"Then let her die. She must be found. Let us see if she has taken her horse."

"No need to go. I know she took him. He'd follow her like a hound all day, she's got him trained so. But I'll catch her. I'll teach her what's what."

"My brother is right. She is no longer fit to live, since she knows the secrets of chiefs. I was very angry at my brother, because he went into the lodge of Lealliwah. But, he has given a good reason, and I am satisfied."

"Shall we follow the woman to-night?"

"No, the moon will soon go away and the night will be dark. In the morning we will take swift horses and follow her. She must not escape."

"She shall not," said the renegade. "You won't find me afraid to kill her when I see her. I hear something to-night I'd like to tell you, if I thort ye wouldn't git mad."

"Let my brother speak."

"Ye won't be angry at me?"

"I can not tell."

"Wal, I'll risk it. As I went by the bed of Lealliwah to-night, she was torkin' in her sleep. An' who d'ye think she were torkin' about?"

"I can not know until I am told. Lealliwah is to be the wife of Telonga."

"It was Harris."

An expression of savage rage passed over the face of Telonga. He raised his hand on high, holding a hatchet, shaking it at the stars.

"Stay, dog of a pale-face," he shouted. "Why will you not linger, when a son of the Shawnees calls?"

"Why, chief, what does ye mean?"

"Thus is it ever with the pale-faces. They are not satisfied to steal away our lands, but they will take our women also. See."

He drew his knife and made an incision in his right arm, from which the blood flowed. He stained the handle of the hatchet and of the knife, in the flowing tide.

"This blood shall not be washed away," he said, until both have drunk deep from the heart of Harris.

"You can't hate him wuss then I do. It stands to natur' that the

gal should like him. He's a handsome young feller, ye see, an' he's talked soft nonsents to the gal till she don't rightly know what to think. It's more nat'ral in her than the other gals, tu."

"I will kill him," shouted Telonga, shaking hatchet and knife in the air.

"That's right, chief! Du it, that's all! He's a mighty strong young feller. I reckon ye'll hev an all-fired tussle when ye put him on his back. He got away from us onct when he had a broken arm, and kerried off a feller on his back that was shot thru both legs. I kinder think that was pooty good. So, don't be sure of him till ye hev his skulp."

"Telonga is a chief!" cried the savage, fiercely.

"That's true," said Girty. "But, ef I must say it, that don't make much difference. It's the solid bone an' muscle thet tells in the end when ye hev it with a man, nip an' tuck. No, chief, don't ye go ter trustin' yerself with him in a stand-up fight. Ten to one he licks ye."

"There is no white man who is the equal of Telonga in battle," said the chief, still more angrily. "Where is the man that dares stand before him? Not Boone himself; not Harrod; not the Big Hunter."

"Never put yourself in his way, ef ye vally yer life a farden's worth," earnestly replied the renegade. "Ez sure ez ye do, yer a dead man. I seen him that night, an' I don't want to see him ag'in."

"Is my brother afraid?"

"No more ner ye air. Stands to reason a man can't hold out ag'in the devil. He is nothin' else. You should hev seen him on the trail of Achinga, who ran like a deer. He left the body in the woods for the crows to feed on."

"I will meet him some day. The Big Elk of the Shawnees fears not the face of mortal man."

"This ain't no mortal," said Simon. "Don't ye believe it. But, come; let's get some rest. We must be on the trail 'arly in the mornin'. An' ef Eliza ain't buried to-morrer night, believe me, I'll eat my huntin'-shirt."

"My brother shall be successful; and when this work is done, let the white settlements in Kantuckee tremble, for Telonga will be a scourge to them."

"They know me now, pooty well," said Simon. "A man like me kain't very well git along without it. Everybody knows that I am a friend of the Injins. I always mean to be, 'cause they've been friends to me, all thru."

"We have tried to do right by our good brother Girty," answered the Indian.

"So ye hev, chief; so ye hev. An' I ain't been unfriendly to ye. Good-night!"

At early morning they started on the trail. Only five of the warriors accompanied them, for they never dreamed that the party of scouts and hunters were in the woods. They only thought to pursue Eliza, and in some way to take away her life. Whatever the secret of which they knew her to be possessed, they considered it of sufficient importance to put her life in awful jeopardy.

Lealliwah came out of the lodge as they prepared to ride away, looking more beautiful than ever. Telonga looked at her fiercely, and taking her hand, led her back into the lodge.

"Did you dream last night, daughter of the wicked heart?" he said.

"What does the chief mean?" she said, a guilty flush coming into her face, for she remembered of whom she had dreamed.

"Lie not to me, false-hearted one," he said. "Listen to the words of Telonga. A great chief never lies. He has said that you shall come into his lodge and it shall be done. Neither shall you have so long to wait. When two moons are gone, you must come into Telonga's lodge."

"Lealliwah has promised to be

the wife of Telonga," said the girl, in a low voice, "and when the time comes, she will keep her word. But, she will not marry him before."

"Who has given Lealliwah the right to say what she will do, and what she will not do?" demanded the chief.

"Who has taken from her the right to do so," replied Lealliwah, boldly. "You have called me false, and have said I must marry you before the time. I say, I will not."

"Last night in your dreams, you murmured the name of the white hunter. Dare you deny it?"

"I will speak no more," replied the girl, taking immediate refuge behind her womanly obstinacy. "Do not ask me."

"Lealliwah may yet meet one, by whom she can be made to speak," said the chief, his face blanching with anger. "But, let that rest now. My brother Girty and myself go out to do some work which must be done. When we return, the houses of settlers shall again light up the border."

"Where is Eliza?" demanded the girl, boldly.

"How should I know. She has fled."

"You go to seek her. Beware what you do, Telonga! If harm comes to that poor woman, and you are the cause, I will never come into your lodge. Bring her back safe to the village or I will think she has been killed, and you will be the cause."

"Is Telonga a dog?" cried the chief, "that he should come and go at a woman's bidding? You have most cause to beware, for this hand, which loves you now, might lay you dead at my feet, as Girty struck down the false woman who was his wife."

"If Simon Girty is a brute, and threatens and strikes the woman who loves him, it is mete that Telonga should follow so good an example, and be cruel to Lealliwah."

"The blame rests not with Telonga. He has loved Lealliwah long, and has seen her grow up as a flower. He has always thought to make her his wife. But, if she is wicked, and dreams of another, of course the blame can not be put upon Telonga's shoulders. They are broad, but they are not broad enough to bear it."

Lealliwah turned from him in anger and he left the lodge, mounted, and rode out upon the trail. Before half an hour had passed Lealliwah was also in the saddle, following on their trail. No one attempted to stop her. She was always free to come and go as she pleased. They rode at a rapid pace along the broad trail the madwoman left behind her, and evidently gained upon her in every mile. But, as the morning advanced, the madwoman began to push the horse she rode, at a pace far beyond the power of any animal in the party. She was a splendid horsewoman, while the Shawnees, proverbially bad riders, made but little progress, which caused the irascible Simon to growl and fume. Hour after hour passed, and the trail grew no fresher than before.

"Tell you what it is, chief, I'm afraid we are dished. She's got the best hoss in the kentry, I reckon—a real out-an'-outer. He kin keep up that pace for forty days an' forty nights, ef she's a mind to push him tu it."

"Then we can not catch her," said the chief. "Why should we ride further?"

"She may stop," said Girty, "or she may get picked up by some of the men. This trail would take her straight to the Valley of Cedars ef she kep' on it long enough."

"No white man's foot, except a prisoner's, ever presses the soil of the Valley of Cedars, while Telonga lives," said the chief.

"Jest ez ye say. It ain't safe tu let on thet the valley is a good deal nigher than people s'pose it is. I never hearn a ranger speak of it ez less than a thousand miles

long, when, in reality, it's 'bout four hundred. But, that's a goodish stretch of kentry tu travel. Seems tu me this trail begins to freshen."

"I think we are coming nearer to her," said the chief. "Let us hasten on our way."

They pushed their horses to the best speed of which they were capable, and going wherever they went, turning where they turned, halting when they did, a white pony, tireless as the trained steed of the desert, followed on their trail. About sunset they came up with the object of their search. She had dismounted upon the brink of the river, and had seated herself by the running stream, plaiting and smoothing the hair which had once been a glory to her, and singing in a mournful voice, a plaintive ditty which she had sung in happier days. She did not look surprised or frightened as the Indians rushed in and seized her, and Simon grasped her roughly by the throat. She put up her hands, and by an exercise of strength which seemed hardly possible in her, removed his grasp.

"Keep away, man," she said.

"What do you want here?"

"I want you, my joy," said Simon, with a savage grin. "A pooty chase ye've led us, ain't ye? What yer got tu say before I kill ye?"

"Go away, man," she replied. "I don't know you. Tell these red fellows to go away too. I don't like them."

"We have come to kill you," said her husband.

"To kill me? I don't know what that means. Was my husband killed?"

With a brutal oath, he lifted his hand and struck her to the earth. She rose laughing, and brushed the dirt from her disordered dress.

"I'm Mistress of the Woods now," she said, showing a garland of flowers she had been wearing. "You have insulted me. I banish you from my presence, man, on pain of death."

"Tain't no use to dally with her," said Simon. "Shall I shoot her. That's the easiest way."

Telonga bowed. But, as the villain cocked and leveled his weapon, a mounted figure suddenly burst in between, and a short rifle was pointed at the renegade's head. Lealliwah was before him! Girty fell back in confusion, and Telonga uttered a surprised exclamation. The face of the young girl was flushed, and indicated a firm resolve to save the poor creature at any sacrifice.

"Stand back," she cried. "I will shoot you if you come near her, Girty."

"This won't do," growled the wretch. "I ain't goin' to stand it, Telonga. What business hez this gal to interfere in men's business?"

"What brought you here, then, Girty?" said the girl, angrily. "Have you ridden so fast and far to kill a woman? You shall not do it while Lealliwah lives."

"Lealliwah must go back," said Telonga. "She has nothing to do here."

"Let the chief reflect," said the girl, keeping her eye on Girty, and speaking hurriedly. "This is a woman. Telonga is not the man to kill a woman. The hand of the Great Spirit is heavy on her. Has Telonga forgotten the traditions of the tribe? Can he have the heart to kill a woman who has never done him harm?"

"I am not afraid of Simon," said Eliza, laughing. "What does he want to do? I have never been so happy as I am to-day."

"Down with her!" roared Girty. "Tie her hands, and throw her into the river."

"No, no," pleaded Lealliwah. "She can do no harm."

"Lealliwah does not know of what she speaks," said Telonga. "The woman must die. It is spoken."

"Telonga has said that he loves Lealliwah. He has asked her to come into his lodge. Would he take her with red hands?"

Telonga was silent.

"Lealliwh will make a promise. Give me the life of this woman, and let her be taken to the Valley of Cedars. From that she can not escape. Once there, and if Telonga promises that she shall not be harmed, Telonga will have a wife, for Lealliwh will go into his lodge when two moons are past."

"Don't listen to her," growled Girty. "Think what ye do. It's only a trap."

"If Lealliwh will give her promise to do this," said Telonga, "the word of a great chief will be passed, and Eliza shall be safe."

"All right, chief," said Girty, angrily. "Ef thet's the way ye use a man, it will sarve ye right ef ye du git tricked out of the gal, ez I know ye will be."

"Let the chief give me his hand, and say that Eliza shall be safe, and that she shall go to the Valley of Cedars, and I will give my promise."

Telonga gave her his hand. From that moment Eliza was safe. Girty stormed and swore, but his anger had no effect upon the chief. Eliza was mounted upon her own horse, and the party set out together for the Valley of Cedars, now only five days' journey from the spot where they stood, to those as well acquainted with the way as they. Lealliwh rode by the side of the chief.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE VALLEY OF CEDARS.

FOR days they rode on over the long trail. As river after river was forded, and mile upon mile was placed between her and the settlements, the heart of Lealliwh sunk. She had done a noble deed, had saved the life of a fellow-creature, but, at what a sacrifice! She had never thought before how terrible it would be to be united with the dread chief. Indeed, before the coming of Harris, she had been proud of her conquest, and of having, by her beauty and grace, won the heart of the bravest chief of all.

Since she had seen Harris in danger, and witnessed his gallant bearing, she had recognized the difference between the bravery which arises from bravado, and that which comes from a noble sense of honor. She had passed many a sleepless night, drawing mental comparisons between the two men, and was forced to acknowledge to her own heart that the comparison was fatal to Telonga.

The die was cast. She had given her promise, that, if the life of Eliza was spared, she would be the bride of Telonga. He stood before her, and her heart cried out against him, for, in this extremity, she could see his failings, the result of a savage education.

Telonga cast frequent glances at her as they rode along. He was not certain of his prize. The sly hints of Girty annoyed him more than he cared to confess. He thought, in his heart, of the whispered name which Girty had heard, and his heart was full of bitterness against the young white man. How he hoped for the time when they could meet upon the greensward, in some silent glade, foot to foot, point to point, and fight the battle out to the death! The words of Girty had stung him to the quick, when he said that Harris was his equal, if not his superior, in strength and skill. His dark brow contracted with rage at the thought.

Girty was boiling over with rage. The only thing which restrained him from shooting his wife through the head was the anger of Telonga. He knew—none so well as he—the influence of Lealliwh over the great chief. It was even sufficient, in his estimation, to drive the renegade from the tribe, if she chose to exert it to the utmost; and the scoundrel was proud of his terrible fame.

"Chief," said he, "I'd like to speak to ye, ef ye kin spare the time."

They fell to the rear together. Lealliwh rode to the side of Eliza, and placed her hand on hers, in a soothing way. The tears started into her poor, worn eyes at the womanly action.

"It is so long since any one was kind to me," she said. "I love you. Some day I will tell you what I know."

Girty laid his hand upon the saddle of the chief.

"I want to speak with ye 'bout somethin'. I s'pose ye know thet them two gals thet was taken the other day, an' ar' now at the valley, are the darters of leadin' settlers?"

"I have heard it so said," replied the chief. "Does my brother know them?"

"Yes. Ye've hearn tell of Dan'l Boone, I reckon? Wal, one of them gals is his darter. I know her well enough. The other is Calloway's darter. Hearn of him, too. Now, I want one ov them gals fer a wife."

"My brother has a wife."

"She ain't nothin' to me. I turn her out of the lodge from this day. I want a wife. I may ez well tell ye thet it's more out ov revenge on Boone an' the rest, than any thin' else, thet makes me want to marry her. She's a proud 'un, that Amy Boone, a desp'rut' proud 'un. It'll bring her down a peg, mebber, when she knows she's got to be my wife. I want her."

"My brother Girty shall have an opportunity. If he can buy her from Mengue, who took her, it is well. She will then be his, and he can do with her as he pleases."

"It's only fa'r thet I should hev her," growled Girty. "I told thet young whelp of satan I'd a mind to du it, an' he offered me every thin' in the world ef I wouldn't. It would be a pull back on him when he hearn tell of it. I'd take mighty good keer he should hear of it, tu."

"Let it be as Girty chooses. If he kin buy her from Mengue, he shall have her. She will then be his slave."

After days of constant travel, the party reached the summit of a mountain-path, and from this elevated perch looked down upon that famed retreat of which the hunters and scouts told such wild tales, by the light of the blazing camp-fires. There it lay, nestling among the hills, as fair a sight as ever greeted the eye of mortal man. A nearly circular valley, walled in on every side by mountain ridges, whose summits, in the distance, rose blue against the sky. A beautiful prospect, indeed. Close at their feet lay the Indian village, by the side of the pleasant river.

As the cavalcade rode down the grassy slope of the mountain, yells below them announced that they were seen, and nearly the entire population of the village came pouring out to meet them, uttering shrill cries of welcome. The party rode on, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, and, after picketing their horses, entered the lodges prepared for them. Wherever Telonga went, a lodge was always in readiness for Lealliwh by the side of his. But, as this was a village where she spent a great part of the year, her own lodge received her.

Simon Girty, with his heart full of evil thoughts, sought out the lodge of Mengue, the captor of Amy Boone and Edith Calloway. The Indian was seated at the doorway of his rude house, looking rather sullen. The tribe had not paid him the honor which he thought his due as the captor of the two girls.

"Girty is welcome," he said. "He has been on a long trail."

"Yes, yer right, Mengue. But, I'm hyar on a little matter of business. I hearn ye hed taken a couple of white gals prisoner."

"Mengue has taken two wo-

men, beautiful as stars in the evening sky," said the Indian.

"I've come to make a purchase, ef we kin come to terms. Ez tu ther bein' any sech great shakes ez ye try to make 'em out, thet ain't no use, Mengue. Ther good enough, an' as I hev turned my wife out of my lodge, I'd like to take one of these in."

"Which one did my brother want. The dark-hair, with eyes like stars in the pleasant weather, or the maiden with hair like the sunshine?"

"I'd rather hev the fust, ef it's all the same to ye. That's Amy B—no, never mind her name. I don't seem to keer much for either, but, beln' I'm a white man I'd like a white wife, ye see."

"What will my brother Girty give for the dark-hair?"

"Let Mengue name his price."

"Mengue does not care to sell," said the Indian, in the genuine spirit of trade. "My brother does not want them very much. Mengue is willing to keep them. My brother can take an Indian wife."

"Name yer price," said Girty. "Mengue must have the horse my brother Girty rode to-day, and two new blankets. And he must have the fire-bow my brother carries in his belt."

He referred to Simon's pistols.

"Don't be bashful," sneered Girty. "Wouldn't ye like the rest of my hosses? Or perhaps ye would like my rifle?"

"I see my brother does not want to buy," said the Indian.

"It is just that he should do as he pleases. Mengue will keep the dark-hair."

"Now, be r'asonable, Mengue. Name a fa'r price. I wouldn't mind it, so fur ez to give ye a good hoss fer her. That's more then any 'uman is r'ally wuth, but, I'll give ye thet. Ye shill hev the sorrel pony I ride sometimes."

"Two blankets," said Mengue, sturdily. "Small fire-bow."

"But, it ain't fa'r," said Girty. "Blame my cats, ef I think a man hadn't orter be r'asonable in any thin'. Say I give ye the hoss an' one blanket."

"Two blankets," repeated Mengue. "Fire-bow. If not, keep dark-hair."

"I'll give ye the hoss an' the fire-bow."

"Two blankets," said Mengue, holding up two fingers.

"Wal, I s'pose it must be done, Mengue. I'll give it, but blame me ef it ain't extortion. I never paid so much fer a wife in all my born days."

"Got good wife dis time, Girty."

"Whar is she?"

"In lodge," said Mengue. "You give me fire-bow, now. I go get hoss an' blankets. You go take her."

Amy Boone and Edith Calloway sat clasped in each other's arms as the ruffian entered the lodge. Both started up in alarm at the grizzly and ferocious face which entered. Edith uttered a shriek, and held tighter to Amy.

"Keep still, gal," said Girty, in a rough tone. "What yer yellin' about, say? I'll give yer somethin' ter shet yer mouth in about half a minnit, ef ye don't take keer. Does yer know me?"

"No, sir," said Amy. "I only see that you are a white man, and as such, must have some pity on one of your race in distress."

"Ye kain't tell 'bout thet," said Girty. "Anyhow, I kain't help ye a great deal. I s'pose ye don't know me. Then I'll tell ye my name, an' ye'll know how much to expect. I'm Simon Girty. Does yer know me now?"

A cry of terror broke from the lips of both girls. Heard of him? Who had not heard of that execrable wretch, upon the borders of Kentucky. The women scared their children to sleep with the name. Even strong men blanched when it was mentioned. That cry of repulsion roused all that was cruel and base in the heart of the renegade.

"Now what yer yellin' about?"

he cried, fiercely. "What's ther in a feller's name I should like to know? Don't either of ye yell that way ag'in, or I'll give ye somethin' to remember me by. Mind thet."

They were silent then.

"Now, I ask ye, take me all in all what does yer think of me? I ain't speakin' to ye now, Edith Calloway."

"Why need you ask my opinion of you," said Amy. "You know it already."

"Give it mouth, then."

"I should only make you angry to no purpose. I will not give you my opinion."

"I thort mebber ye mout, seein' we've got ter be together a good while. I jest kum in tu tell ye thet I'd bought ye from Mengue. I s'pose ye know what thet means? Ye must be my wife."

"Your wife, Simon Girty!" shrieked the girl. "Do you know that I would die any lingering death of torment which savage ingenuity could heap upon me, perish by piecemeal, rather than marry you!"

"Jest so. Now, does yer know thet I expected some sech ans'er ez thet? What do I keer? Yer my slave; does yer hear me? My slave! What kin save ye? Nothin' kin keep ye out of my lodge."

"I would kill myself first."

"Perhaps ye would, an' perhaps ye wouldn't. I kain't tell. Only I don't mean to give ye any sech chaine ez thet. I guess I know which side my bread is buttered on."

"Spare me," said Amy, falling on her knees at his feet. "Kneel with me, Edith. Beg him to spare me. Put me to any pain you choose, let me labor bare-headed and with naked feet under the scorching sun, any thing rather than this."

"Thet's right," chuckled Girty. "I like to see yer pride humbled in the dust. When yer my wife, I'll send a runner to Booneville to let 'em know about it. Ha, ha! This is somethin' like revenge ag'in the men that whipped me like a dog, till the blood run off my naked back. Yes, yes; somethin' like revenge."

"Oh, spare her," pleaded Edith.

"You ain't got no call to crow over this gal a bit, little 'un. Ye'll be an Injin's wife within three days. Mind what I tell ye. I'll bring down yer pride, the pair on ye."

Edith dropped at his feet in a dead faint.

"It works; it works," he muttered. "Ah, ef I only hed Ned Harris here now, how I'd make him howl!"

"Remember we have friends, Simon Girty," cried Amy, lifting the head of Edith on her knee. "Dread the vengeance of Daniel Boone, of Harrod, of Harris! Ah, they will make you weep tears of blood for this."

"I guess not. Dan'l Boone is in Chillicothe. I don't see how he's goin' to hurt anybody; and ez for the rest, I don't vally 'em a farthin'."

"Then dread the vengeance of an offended God," said Amy, solemnly, raising one hand on high.

Girty laughed hoarsely. "I don't have nothin' to say ter Him. I've got the devil himself on my side, an' I reckon I kin manage to worry along somehow."

"When you were a child, and innocent, and prayed at your mother's knee, would any one believe that any thing so villainous could rise from such a root?"

"That's twice I've bin twitted of my mother," said Girty, in a hoarse, strained voice. "You ain't no call to dig her out'n her grave. She don't know about what I'm doin'. That was a lie of Harris. What did he say 'bout a sperrit? Sperrit! I don't believe it. Why kain't they lie quiet in their graves?"

"Since that innocent time, Simon Girty, how many murders have you committed? How the blood, the innocent blood of your many victims will cry out against you in the day of judgment!"

"Keep still, gal," roared the villain. "What a tongue ye keep in yer head. Don't speak ag'in 'bout that, or it will be all the wuss for ye."

"Make up your mind to one thing, Simon Girty. I will never be your slave."

"Ye kain't help yerself," replied the ruffian. "I give ye two days; at the end of that time ye must be my wife."

As he left the lodge the Queen of the Woods entered, bestowing upon him any thing but a pleasant glance as she passed.

"I don't keer fer yer black looks," he muttered.

"Never forget that Lealliwah has power, if she chooses to use it. Beware what you do."

She entered the lodge. Amy still sat with Edith's head upon her knees, bathing her upturned face with tears. The gentle heart of Lealliwah melted at the sight, and she ran out hastily and brought in a gourd of water, with which she bathed the face of the fainting girl. Edith recovered her senses with a start and a gasp.

"Ah, Amy; that dreadful man! Is he gone?"

"Yes, dear; you have nothing to fear from him now. But, in two days, I must find some way to end my life, or be his wife. Death is dreadful to one so young, but any death is preferable to the lingering death in life I should pass with him."

Lealliwah had learned to speak English, in a very broken and pretty manner, from the officers' wives at the British garrison towns, and from a priest who had spent a year among the Shawnees.

"Poor girl," said she, softly.

"See, Lealliwah is very sorry."

"Thank you," said Edith.

"Oh, if you could help us!"

"Like to, great much," said Lealliwah.

"But, how can help, when no got any way? Try to much, sometime."

"You are very beautiful," said Amy, "and you have not an Indian heart. Whether you aid us or not, I shall love you."

"Lealliwah very glad," said the Indian girl, softly.

"Like to be loved. Love white girl much. What name?"

"My name is Amy Boone."

"Know Boone, my own self. Great hunter, big brave; kill too many Shawnee. One time Telonga catch him at Blue Licks, but him git 'way. Too much big hunter, Boone! What name, her?"

She pointed to Edith.

"Edith Calloway."

"Know young hunter, tall, like pine, beautiful hair, eyes that ask questions. Harris, long-knives call him?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Amy; "dear Ned. Is he safe—is he well?"

"Love him?" asked Lealliwah, quickly, a slight cloud passing over her beautiful face.

"Every one loves him."

"Yes; know dat; but love him to marry. Go in lodge?"

"Oh, no," said Amy, blushing; "he will not look at any of us in that way; but we all like him; he is handsome, brave and noble. Have you seen him?"

"Yes. Looks for some one he lost. No love him to marry, eh?"

"Certainly not," said Amy.

To her surprise the Indian girl sprung up, threw her arms about her neck, and kissed her fervently on both cheeks. Then she hugged Edith.

"Love you, too, much; save you, if can; but how can do unless Harris come?"

"Does he dream of it? Oh, I shall never forget the days and nights we spent on the water and on the march hither. Night followed day, day followed night, until I was weary and heart-sick, for every mile was a new bar between me and my home and friends."

"Poor Boone," said Lealliwah, who had forgotten the first name.

"Lealliwah very sorry. Mebbe Harris come, mebbe not; perhaps git killed, good many Shawnee on long trail."

"I hope he will not come," said

Amy, with a sigh of sorrow; "he could aid us but little, even if he did come. They do not even take the trouble to watch us; they know that we can not escape."

"Fool 'em, mebbe. Massaquoit come; he very sharp. Fool all chief at village. Harris dere, all paint, like Indian; Lealliwah know him, Boone."

"Call me Amy," said the other.

"Ami," said Lealliwah, in her pretty way. "What her name again?"

"Edith."

"Edit. Now remember. Ami—Edit, nice name; sound sweet in ear of young white warrior; got warrior, I know."

Both the girls blushed and Lealliwah laughed merrily, as she took a hand of each, and peeped into their eyes. When at length she left them and they lay down together upon their couch of skins, they felt more at ease than at any time since their capture, in spite of the fear of Girty which hung over Amy.

CHAPTER XL.

GREAT MEDICINE.

Two days passed, and the town was thrown into excitement by the sudden appearance of Massaquoit, who entered the village in his costume of a medicine-man, accompanied by his henchman, Ned Harris, in the droll attire which he had worn upon his first entrance into the Shawnee town. The face of the Indian did not give any evidence of the fatigue which would seem to be the natural consequence of so long a journey as that he had just undertaken. Indeed, the strength and endurance of the man were wonderful. There is no race of men on the face of the earth gifted with greater powers of endurance than the red runner of the American forests, and Massaquoit was a noble type of his class. He entered by the same mountain-pass as that followed by Telonga and Girty, moving at a pace which tried even the fine physical powers of Ned Harris.

All the village turned out to meet them; indeed, it takes but little to rouse a crowd in an Indian town. All looked with curiosity at the new-comers in their fantastic attire, and especially at the supposed madman who followed Massaquoit about as a dog follows his master, dropping at his feet the moment he paused, and leaping up to join him the moment he moved.

Telonga greeted Massaquoit warmly, for the great chief had never given up the idea of joining the tribes in a concentrated effort to drive out the invaders. Moreover, he had some qualms of conscience in regard to the manner in which he had treated the medicine-man in the other village.

"My brother is welcome again. The trail is long from the great river; he will need food and drink. Let him follow Telonga."

As Massaquoit turned to follow, his pupil was at his heels. Telonga looked at him in a questioning manner, and the runner spoke:

"Aleno follows in the steps of Massaquoit. Wherever the medicine-man goes, there Aleno goes also."

Telonga inclined his head, and the disguised man was allowed to proceed. They entered the chief's lodge; Telonga gave an order in a low tone to some women, who were near the entrance, and they disappeared. In a short time they returned, bearing food in large wooden dishes, which they set before Massaquoit and the chief. The food consisted of boiled corn and venison. A similar dish was given to Aleno; he took it with low mutterings of pleasure, and, sitting down in a corner, speedily disposed of it. The long trail had not been one upon which they could hunt with safety and both Massaquoit and

his friend were hungry, though the former took his meal in a sedate manner, as becoming a great chief, and the representative of the tribe of the Mohawks. The other chief took but a slight repast, and looked on with pleasure while Massaquoit finished his meal. This done, pipes were brought in, and a man was sent to ask Girty to join them. He came in, flushed with anger, from a visit to the lodge in which the two girls were confined. They had treated him in a very cavalier manner, especially annoying to him. Massaquoit looked up on his entrance, and it was with difficulty that Ned restrained himself from laying hands upon the monster.

"Where has my brother Girty been? Is the dark-hair more willing to keep the lodge-fire bright for him than she was last sun?" asked Telonga.

"No she ain't, chief," said Girty, "an', what's more, I don't believe she means to be."

"Let my brother have patience. When I said to him, do not make her come into your lodge unwillingly if by any means you can win her to come by kindness, Telonga meant to give his white brother good advice."

"I ain't goin' ter wait much longer nuther," said Girty, sullenly; "now mind that."

It was through the agency of Lealliwah that Edith had obtained a respite. She had begged of Telonga that he would use his influence with Girty to get a longer period of probation for the white prisoner, and he had asked Girty to wait. Indeed, there was little which the great chief would not do at her bidding; he was likewise in her hands, by reason of his great love.

"My brother must not forget that I am a brave," said Telonga, "and that I could force Lealliwah to go into my lodge before the time; but a great chief keeps his word. In two moons, and no sooner, the Queen of the Woods will be the bride of Telonga."

His swarthy face flushed with pleasure at the thought. There was a movement in the corner in which Ned Harris was sitting, and Girty glanced toward him.

"Who is that?" he demanded.

"It is the friend of Massaquoit. Touch him not; he is mad."

"What is he doin' yer?"

"He will not leave the side of his master; he is faithful to him. Let him remain."

The movement was caused by Ned Harris thrusting his hand into his bosom to seize the hilt of a knife. The desire was strong within him to spring upon Girty and stab him to the heart; but a warning gesture from the runner restrained him.

"Will my brother Girty take a white wife, then?" asked Massaquoit.

"Yes; I don't mind tellin' ye who it is, though, ef the truth must be told, ye consort tu much with white men for my likin'. It's Boone's darter."

"Daniel Boone's?"

"Yes; she's got tu be my wife before a week."

Again the hand of Aleno stole to his breast, and again a warning look from Massaquoit kept down his anger.

"Boone is a great hunter," said Massaquoit.

"We've got him fast enough; it's lucky for him I hadn't my way, or he'd never hev' got alive to Chillicothe. I don't see what our men gave him up to the British fer; he'd killed enough Shawnees, I reckon. Anyhow I've got my opinion, an' I don't believe he'll stay there a week."

"Have my red brothers taken many prisoners from the settlers?" asked Massaquoit.

"More'n they orter. I don't like this pris'ner bizness; I like to finish 'em right off. Ther's three men in these woods I'm jest aching ter git my hands on. I'll git 'em, too, some day, or my name ain't Simon Girty."

"Of whom does my brother speak?"

"Fast an' foremost, thar's Ned Harris; I'll give it ter him, hot and heavy, if I ever ketch him ag'in. Then, there's a long Yankee that calls hisself Nathan Hicks, the trader and spy; he's a real sneak, blast his picter; I'll fix his flint, tu. Last, an' not least, is the big hunter."

"Who has ever seen the big hunter?" asked Telonga. "Why does he hate Indians so? All red-men who come in his way die."

"My brother Girty has met the big hunter?" said Massaquoit, in a questioning tone.

"Onct; I don't want tu meet him face tu face neither; but I'd like tu shoot him from a bush—I'll du it, some time."

"My brother must be careful. The fame of the big hunter ranges far and wide along the border; not even that of Telonga or of Girty is heard so often. Let not my brother come in his way, if he can help it; he is swifter than the eagle, he is stronger than the buffalo; all fall before his hand."

"I fear not the big hunter," said Telonga, proudly; "let him come forth and face me."

"My brother is very brave; but has he faced the lightning and struggled with the waterfall in its force? Then, let him think to meet the big hunter of the red-men."

The conversation branched off upon matters relating to the tribes, and Massaquoit listened quietly to the sophistry of the chief, as he showed the advantages of the tribes, in a rising which should reach from Florida to the great lakes. Although Massaquoit realized the impossibility of carrying out such a scheme, he knew better than to interpose any objection. He was waiting for an opportunity to find out who were the prisoners in the camp, and what likelihood there was of getting them free. At last, Telonga withdrew from the lodge to perform some duty, and Simon and Massaquoit were left alone together, while Aleno crouched in a corner.

"That's a strange lad ye've got with yer," said Simon; "whar did ye pick him up?"

"He came to me in the woods," said Massaquoit, "and he would go with me; I never saw him before."

"Why do you trust him?"

"Is he not mad?"

"So is my wife; an' I wouldn't trust her out of the reach of my hand for that very reason. Ef they know any secrets, a mad pusion, an' specially a woman, is sure to blab."

"Aleno knows none of the secrets of Massaquoit, Massaquoit knows none of his. I do not even know from whence he sprung. That is nothing to me; the Great Spirit sent him to me in the woods."

Simon gave an audible snuff of disapprobation. He did not believe in gifts of the Great Spirit. Moreover, he did not like the expression of the eye of the idiot, as it fell upon him.

"I don't like the look of the feller's eye," said Simon. "Anyhow, I wouldn't trust him, ef ye du. But say: du ye know Boone's darter?"

"I have seen her at Booneville," said the Indian.

"Jess so. I allus said ye hed tu much tu du with the durned white men. I say it now; don't du it no more. 'Tain't right fur a man thet ain't good enough to stay with the settlers at Booneville, stayin' with 'em at all. I ain't goin' tu du it for one. They ain't used me right, an' I'll pay 'em, one of these days."

"My brother has done something to the whites," said the Indian.

"I ain't done enuff. I ain't no ways satisfied. Come along. I want ye ter see this gal."

As they walked toward the lodge in which the girls were con-

finer, Aleno rose and followed them.

"What's he comin' fur?" demanded Simon, angrily.

"He never leaves me," replied Massaquoit. "He can do no harm."

Simon looked as if he did not like the arrangement, but he said no more. The girls were sitting on a pile of skins, conversing in an eager manner with Lealliwah. They received the visit in considerable anger at first, and then, recognizing Massaquoit, both sprang to his side, clung to his hand, and entreated him to aid them.

"Massaquoit will do what he can," said the chief, quietly. "But, let the daughter of Boone remember that these are not my people, nor the Shawnee my tribe. I am a Mohawk."

"Thar," said Girty. "Now I hope yer satisfied. Ye can't git no help hyar. Du be r'asonable, gal. Make up yer mind I'm dead sure tu hev ye, so don't bother me any more."

"Your very presence nere is an insult," cried Amy. "Leave us!"

"Simon better go some other place to get wife," said Lealliwah. "No wife here."

"Cuss ye, who told ye to jine in? I'd a hed her long ago ef it wa'n't fer ye. Didn't ye tell the chief not tu let me hev her? Say now, didn't ye?"

"Yes," said Lealliwah. "Do it again; no good man, Girty."

"I'm good enough tu make ye sorry ef ye don't stop thwartin' me, gal. I've stood all the nonsense from ye I'm goin' tu. So don't let's hear no more from ye. Du ye hear?"

"Simon Girty has forgotten to whom he speaks," said Lealliwah, rising in great anger. "I will go to the chief and ask him if the woman he has chosen for his wife is to be insulted by every white dog which chooses to bark at her. I will go to him."

"No. Hold on. I don't want ye tu du thet. The chief an' I ain't so friendly ez we hev bin. Don't speak about it."

"Then why does Girty dare to threaten Lealliwah?" demanded the girl, in a shrill voice.

"I take it back, then. Ain't that fair enuff? I don't want tu quarrel with ye," added the renegade, in a fawning tone.

"Then why do you come here?" asked the Indian girl, still far from mollified. "Don't like you, Girty. Lily-faced girl don't like you either. S'pose you go away, let us alone, then we like you better."

"I ain't goin' away, then," replied Girty, sullenly. "This gal is mine. I bought her, an' I'm goin' tu keep her. Don't say nothin' ag'in' that, 'cause I ain't goin' tu stand it. Nuther the chief, nor yourself, nor any man in the Shawnee nation, hez got any right tu her. I paid enuff fer her, I guess."

A strange sound, half-way between a groan and an exclamation, drew their attention toward the door. Aleno sat there, with his head buried on his knees, his frame agitated by a strange tremor. Massaquoit eyed him closely, fearing that the impulsive young man might break through his disguise, and, by some rash act, peril the safety of the enterprise. It was agony for the young man to hear the villain speak of that innocent girl as his wife. With the utmost difficulty he restrained the impulse to bury a knife to the hilt in his black heart, and then die, if die he must, destroying every foe he could. The Indian, more cool than he, had thus far restrained him by the magnetism of his eye, but he felt that if he remained much longer in the presence of Girty, he would find it impossible to restrain his companion.

Girty, angry at the opposition he was receiving on every hand, became more angry each moment. He cast fearful looks at the captive girls, and at Lealliwah.

"What's that chap growlin' about thar in the corner?" he asked. "Better keep still. Any per-

son wud think he was a-dyin'. Durh him, I don't like him. He's got a pizon, snaky kind of eye. I don't like him."

The liking in this case was certainly mutual. The wish in the heart of Harris was, "How I would like to kill the black dog!" He thought of the fearful scourging he had received, of the heated knives, of the hatchets and arrows, and his hands were convulsively clinched. At this moment they heard a fragment of a wild song. Every one looked up in surprise. Only Lealliwah and Simon recognized the voice.

"Curse her," muttered Simon, "I'll kill her yit."

"You never dare touch her, Girty," said Lealliwah. "You do, I kill you."

"She'd do it," said the villain. "She's got it in her heart tu murder me."

"Yes, do it sure, s'pose you hurt Eliza," said the girl.

CHAPTER XL.

THE BIRDS FLOWN!

THE weird song never ceased; the curtain of the lodge was suddenly pushed aside, and the wife of Girty entered. She had never looked more like a maniac. Her hair, before this rugged and unkempt, now hung in a tangled mass about her face. Every lineament of her countenance was sharpened by pain and exposure. Yet, in spite of all, there was a happy smile upon her face, such as is often seen in those who suffer from diseases of the brain. The song she sung was an old ditty, such as they sung in the olden time.

"He is dead and gone, my darling,
He is dead and gone.
They laid him in the cold, cold ground,
At his head a stone.

"Oh, but your face was bonnie, darling,
Brown was your curling hair.
And your lips were red when they pressed my cheek,
And your face was passing fair.

"They found you dead on the earth, my darling,
Dead by the purling stream;
As they drew the knife from your wounded breast,
I caught its flashing sheen.

"Why should I weep for thee, darling,
Why should I weep for thee?
I have seen thee laid in the cold, cold grave,
Yet live when I'd die for thee."

The pathos with which she sung this rough melody was wonderful. Every heart was touched, except that of Girty. Every tone of her voice, every look of the wild eyes, filled him with rage. He made a stride toward her, and would have seized her by the arm, but her old protector was at hand. Lealliwah darted between them, and gave him a look which sent him to the other side of the lodge.

"She's my wife," he roared. "I kin du what I like with her, I reckon."

"No," said Lealliwah. "You let Eliza alone. Mine now, you turn her out of your lodge. Lealliwah will take care of her."

"Ha, ha," laughed the maniac. "That is Simon. I used to know Simon. He has blood on his hands always. Simon likes blood. I don't; it smells of mortality too much. Paugh! Did you ever go into a slaughter-house? The cabin where we lived used to smell like that, because Simon killed so many. Yes, Simon liked to kill."

"Keep her still, can't ye?" fiercely shouted the renegade; "ye claim her, don't ye? Take keer of her, I say; I ain't goin' tu hev' her talkin' about me all the time."

"Eliza," said Lealliwah, softly, "you must come away, or Simon will be angry."

"I like to make him angry now; I used to be afraid to talk with him; I am not afraid any more; don't think I am. I mean to beat him some day, as he used to beat me; I don't feel blows now; I am not hungry or cold now, as I used to be before my head was solight. Oh, yes, it's pleasant to have only a few brains. Your servant, sir. I know you; you are called Massa-

quoit, the Mohawk. Find the young man Harris, and even a madwoman can show him where to find what he seeks. I know where Constance is."

"Tell me," said Lealliwah.

"Tell you! Ha, ha, ha! Tell you! That would be good! Do you know that is the funniest thing I ever heard in all my life; funny, funny, funny—oh, let me laugh! I never laughed when I was with Simon, you know; so I must laugh a little now."

Massaquoit again exchanged looks with the disguised young man. That single sentence from the madwoman's lips had done more to quiet his raging brain than any thing else could have done. Even the atrocities of Girty could not excite him now. The purpose of his life, the one solitary hope which had sustained him during his years of perilous adventure by flood and field, seemed to be near fruition. The madwoman, in her wild speech, had given him hope of the dawning of a brighter morning. From the days of his youth he had invested Constance Harding with attributes like those of no other woman. She was to be his, the wife of his bosom, the woman he could cherish, even to the end.

Such thoughts as these passed like the lightning-flash through the brain of Ned, as he crouched on the floor and bit pieces of straw, which he picked up, in simulated madness. Girty was in an agony of fear and rage. The secret, for the safety of which he would have killed his wife, now trembled on her lips. Only one thing kept him from breaking through the feeble guard of Lealliwah, and shooting down Eliza on the spot, and that was that she had said she would tell no one but Ned Harris. He never dreamed that the young man would make the attempt to penetrate the Valley of Cedars, and if he did, he had strong hopes that the terrible trial would overcome him.

Little did he dream that the painted idiot, crouching so near at hand, was the man he hated.

"Onet fer all, Lealliwah," said the renegade, "this can't go on nohow; don't ask it. Ye kin see with half an eye that thar ain't no chaince for me, ef I give up to the whim of every woman thet comes in my way. Now, this is my wife, and she's talkin' things she ain't no business ter—things thet I want tu keep secret."

"Eliza shall not tell your secrets," said Lealliwah; "that is only right; but you shall not harm her."

Simon shook a threatening finger at the maniac, and went slowly out of the lodge, followed by Massaquoit. Lealliwah had stationed herself near the door, and, as Aleno passed out, she whispered in his ear:

"Be careful; I know you."

No start betrayed the surprise of the young man, and he followed Massaquoit as if nothing had been said. Lealliwah turned to her white friend with a smiling face:

"Hope now, good hope; some one come dis night, set you free, mebbe."

Edith clasped her hands, and raised her mild eyes toward heaven. Amy's face flushed, and her dark orbs sparkled with joy.

"Who is it?" she whispered.

"You no mine dat; good enough, dey come. Ain't Massaquoit here, friend to white man? Course he help you! S'pose you hear some one make noise in lodge to-night, no be scare; some one help you, mebbe."

"I know who it is," said Edith; "she can not deceive me. It is Ned, brave Ned Harris; there is no other man at the settlement who would peril so much for his friends."

"Is it Ned?" asked Amy; "come, be good, tell us about it."

"You think Harris brave?" asked Lealliwah; "how you no love him, den? When Indian gir. see brave young man, want him for

herself. Telonga very brave, but not young. Like young chief best."

Amy laughed at this naive confession, and Lealliwah, taking the infection, also laughed heartily, with an abandon which was in itself a charming sight; her laugh rung out clear as the music of a silver bell, and even Edith caught the infection and begun to laugh too. Lealliwah stopped suddenly.

"What you laugh at dere?" she said, in her charming broken English, knitting her pretty brows, and giving herself an appearance of intense anger; "s'pose you laugh at me, I be very mad! How can you do so, you so wicked girls?"

They only laughed the more heartily, and the three sat down together, and, winding their arms about each other's waists, they laid their heads together until the moon came out in the sky.

The village was now quiet.

Not a sound broke the stillness of the pleasant valley. A sort of silver haze rested over all, showing in the distance the lofty mountain-ranges to the west, and near at hand, the peaks through whose defiles the valley was entered from the east. The pale rays of the moon fell on the silent village as serenely as if no thought of murder or bloodshed dwelt in the hearts of any who slept below.

There were some who did not sleep that night; one of these was Ned Harris. They had been lodged in the abode of Simon Girty, and, when Massaquoit lay down to rest, Ned coiled himself up like a faithful dog, at the feet of the chief. Girty cast a look slightly savoring of fear at him before he lay down to rest; but, thrusting away such shallow forebodings, he too lay down to sleep. Once he had looked toward the couch upon which his guests lay, and had seen the glittering eyes of Aleno, beaming in the darkness, fixed full upon him. He fell asleep at last, muttering invectives against those he hated. As his loud snore fell upon their ears, Massaquoit stirred slightly, and touched Ned Harris with his foot. The time for action had come.

Harris touched the foot of the other to signify that he was ready, but beyond that made no sign, and waited to assure himself that the sleep of Girty was not feigned. Being assured of this he rose slowly to his knee, and Massaquoit did the same. Each had drawn his knife, and held it in his mouth for convenience, as they crawled along the ground toward the sleeping man. A single ray of moonlight, streaming through a hole in the top of the lodge, fell upon his upturned face, and showed it, sullen, savage, dark, and full of venom. Harris almost shuddered, as his glance fell upon that face. Some writer says truly, that, in sleep, the countenance of a man is an index of his character. In his waking moments he may mask his feelings well; but when sleep touches the eyelids, the worldly man too falls asleep, and the real man is there.

There was something terribly repulsive in the countenance of Simon Girty; nature seldom stamped the image of Satan more plainly on a human face and form. In sleep he was simply hideous. His mouth was open showing his protruding teeth. His bristling hair fell upon the bearskin which he used for a bolster. His great hand clutched the hilt of a knife, for, even as he slept, he thought of murder. Ned hesitated.

"Should he kill him?"

He thought of the words of Othello to Desdemona, "I would not kill thy soul." Had this wretch a soul to be saved? Was it not surely damned, marked for the pit, distorted, demon-like?

He raised the knife on high. As he did so, the man awoke. Quick as thought, the hand of Massa-

quoit fell upon his mouth, and the other hand upon his throat, holding it in a vice-like grasp.

"Speak above a whisper," said Harris, "and the knife is in your heart."

The villain was shivering with terror, and he made a sign to Massaquoit to take his hand from his throat. The Mohawk loosened his hold slightly, while Ned pressed the blade of his knife against the breast, so that he could feel the point.

"Take away your hand, Massaquoit," said Ned. "He will not dare to speak."

"Is that you, Ned Harris?" demanded the renegade.

"Never mind who it is," said Ned. "Here, Massaquoit, take the knife, and if he moves, give it to him."

Ned hastily prepared a gag, which he thrust into the mouth of the renegade, who dared make no resistance. After this, they tied him firmly to the center-pole of the lodge, binding him in the manner known in the army as "backing."

"I think he is safe," said the young man. "Now, chief, let us go."

Securing such arms and ammunition from the outlaw's full store as they required, they left the lodge and passed out into the open air. No one was in sight. Massaquoit proceeded to the lodge of Lealliwah and looked in. As he did so, some one took his hand and pulled him in. Harris followed. It was Lealliwah. She was fully dressed and evidently prepared for some enterprise. Her dark eyes sparkled with enthusiasm.

"Constance not here," she said. "Only Edit and Ami. Love them both. Wish I could keep dem always, dey so good. You come to save 'em, Harris?"

"Yes," said he, sadly. "I had hoped, however, from what the wife of Girty said, that I might be able to save the woman I seek, my never-forgotten Constance Harding. Alas that I seek in vain."

He spoke in the Indian tongue. "Not speak Shawnee, Harris. Lealliwah white girl, dis one day. Not know white talk very well, but talk it good deal. I know him by and by. Why you talk of Constance? She dead, mebbe! Eliza say no; but, Eliza mad. Poor Eliza."

Ah yes; poor Eliza! Better that you had never been born than to have fallen into the hands of Simon Girty. Driven to drink by utter wretchedness, she had sunk lower and lower in the moral scale, until only in moments when the iron entered into her soul she remembered what she had been and what she was. For her, it seemed there could never come the dawning of a brighter and a better morning.

"Where is Eliza now?" whispered the young man, with his lips unnecessarily close to the shell-like ear of Lealliwah. If it had been light enough, he would have seen the color mount into her cheek at the action. A half sigh escaped her.

"Come," she said. "You will go away. You will take away Edit and Ami. Perhaps you will find Constance and be happy, and poor Lealliwah will forget that she has been white girl for a day, and go into the lodge of Telonga."

"Nonsense," said Ned. "Don't do that."

"Lealliwah promised, if he would spare the life of Eliza, she would go into his lodge after two moons. An Indian girl never breaks her word."

"Be a white girl then! Do not go with him! Rather follow us to the settlements, turn your back upon this people, and live the life you are best fitted for. Edit and Amy would be your friends. There would be no more painful marches, no more sleeping under the trees within sound of the panther, no fighting, no work, save that of home."

The eyes of Lealliwah sparkled,

as if pleased at the thought of such a home, but Massaquoit broke in on their conference.

"Won't do," he said. "No time for it. Work to do. Mus' take keer."

"Lealliwah goes wid you," she said. "You go out of village, quick as you can. I come to you soon, bring Edit and Ami. Dat all pris'ners dey got here."

They left her and walked quickly out on the trail toward the mountains. They had not been there ten minutes when the girl appeared, bringing with her the captive women. The horse-corral was on their way, and Lealliwah aided them in selecting seven of the fleetest and strongest animals in the inclosure. She then took out her own horse and rode with them up the slope.

As they came on at a quick pace and entered the defiles of the mountain, Harris began to sing in a low voice, a song which he had often used as a signal. It brought a response; a dark form glided from the thicket and confronted them. It was the big hunter!

"Is that you, Ned?" he asked.

"All right," replied the young man. "I am here and we have got Edith Calloway and Amy Boone. As for Constance, alas! she is not here!"

The big hunter came forward and looked closely in the faces of the two rescued girls. "Young and comely," he said. "So was she. But the wretches did not spare her for that. Do not shrink from me, girls. I am a man whose life has not all been spent on the border. I once lived a civilized life, with home and loved ones around me; but those blessings were taken from me, and it would be a pleasure to me to lie down and rest in the silence of the grave."

"Who are you, strange man?" said Edith Calloway, in a wondering tone. "I am sorry for your woes."

"Like her, like her!" he murmured, as he turned to the Indian girl. "Come here; you, at least, do not fear me. Ah, how often have I let you pass by unharmed, not knowing why. Speak to me, sweet one. Tell me why I can not resist you, and why I am softened when I see your face?"

"I can not tell," said Lealliwah, giving him her hand. "Have you remembered the words I spoke to you that day, by the river. Have you lifted your rifle against a woman?"

"No," said he. "You had my promise, I have kept that promise, as I will keep any given to you. But, let us be on our way. Many a weary mile must be passed, and you will all be weary enough before we reach our journey's end."

"Lealliwah will go with you, and show a better way," she said. "The trail is not so long when an Indian shows it."

"The Indians will miss you," said the big hunter. "They will be revenged on you."

"S'pose they catch us? I your pris'ner, 'member," said Lealliwah, laughing. "Now, come. Dere horse for you, big hunter. Dere nudder for you friend."

"Here Nathan," called the hunter. "Come out."

The down-easter emerged from the bushes. "How air ye gal?" he exclaimed, as he mounted the horse assigned to him, and the party moved away at a brisk pace. Nathan's horse, evidently unused to a civilized rider, showed its displeasure by sundry efforts to dislodge the Yankee which threatened to arouse the slumbering village. "Whoa, ye brute!"—"git up, ye Shawnee!" united with the rider's peculiar tact in keeping his seat, soon subdued the restive animal, and all moved on.

The Indian girl rode in front. Just behind her came Ned Harris, next Amy, then Nathan, then Edith, then the big hunter, while Massaquoit, on foot, brought up the rear. On the levels they generally left the runner behind, but, on the upland, and in the

heavy flats, he again caught them. Lealliwah pushed the march all night. She knew well that the Indians would pursue them at early morning. Every thing depended on the time gained before Telonga discovered the escape of the prisoners.

The party moved on. Little was said. Indeed, it was not a time for many words.

Morning came, and found them still upon the trail. They halted long enough to eat a hasty meal, and then once more hurried on.

CHAPTER XLII.

A RIFT OF LIGHT.

On the third day of the hurried journey a new member was added to the party. Massaquoit, lingering in the rear, became satisfied that some one was following. He gave no alarm, but at a turn in the path through a thick grove, lay down in the bushes, rifle in hand, to wait for the spy.

Whoever it was, came on rapidly; he could hear the bushes crack as the heavy body of a horse passed through. A moment after, the rider came in sight. It was Eliza! "Ah-ha," she said. "They thought to run away from me because their heads were heavier than mine. But, I was too sharp for them after all—too sharp."

"Why you here, Eliza?" demanded the runner. "Go back."

"No," she replied, shaking her head. "I am going with you. Don't trouble me, Indian. I am going to find Harris. When I find him, I will whisper something in his ear which will make him wonder."

Massaquoit saw that it would be useless to attempt to drive her back, so he released his hold of the bridle, and ran by the side of the horse until they caught up with the party. Every one was surprised, but Eliza only laughed loudly, and kissed the Indian girl.

"I could not stay away from you," she said.

"How did you know we were gone? You were asleep when we left the village."

"I had one eye open," she replied, with the cunning of madness. "I saw you go. I followed and caught my horse. I did not catch up with you before, because you might have made me go back. Now you can't. I am not afraid of anybody here. I love everybody. I love my horse. He can go faster than any horse here."

"Was there any noise in the village when you came away?" asked Ned.

"No," she answered. "They were asleep. Simon wasn't asleep, for I looked into his lodge, and he was standing up against the stake chewing a stick. What was he doing that for? He didn't seem to like it much, either."

Ned laughed heartily at this speech. He was pleased to learn that Simon gnawed a stick all night.

"What is this?" demanded the big hunter. "I thought we left this woman in the cabin?"

"She went away from that," said Ned, "and found her way to the Valley of Cedars."

"None but a madwoman would have attempted it. Poor creature. Her's has been a sad life. I know something of her history. She was the wife of a man who loved her dearly, when Simon Girty was young, and the villain won her heart away from her husband, and afterward killed him."

"Do you taunt me with what I have been and what I am?" she half screamed. "Don't speak to me, then. I know that Simon betrayed me, but I loved the wretch. I could tear his heart out now. Don't make me madder than I am. Ha—ha! When I think of the days when I was young, how my brain whirled! Yet, I laugh at it. I will be happy!"

"Don't speak of it," said Ned, hurriedly. "She can not bear that. Be calm, my poor woman. Ride on, every one. We have a long road before us yet."

Night and day they pressed forward on the trail. They allowed themselves no rest. When near an Indian village, the knowledge which Lealliwah and Massaquoit possessed enabled them to make a wide circuit and leave it behind. Through the deep woods, over the grassy meadows, by the "licks" where the deer came down to drink, through mountain passes, beside silent streams—on they went. The women were pale and weary. Only Lealliwah showed no fatigue. The iron-limbed hunters felt it but slightly. The horses showed it more. The speed with which they had marched had thus far left pursuit behind, though they expected each day to hear the yells of the Shawnees in pursuit. Many Indians had passed near them, engaged in hunting, but they had thus far managed to keep out of sight. On the morning of the sixth day they broke through a deep underbrush, and a river lay before them, known even to the women. A cry of joy broke from every lip.

"The Green river!" cried Ned Harris. "By the help of God, we shall yet reach home."

The words had scarcely left his lips when a sudden chorus of yells, such as only Indians can utter, warned them that the enemy was at hand. A grim determination showed itself in every face at the cry. Ned grasped his rifle more firmly; the girls turned pale; Lealliwah only remained unmoved. Upon her beautiful face an expression of innate bravery, which few women show, seemed to settle and condense.

She grasped the little weapon which she always carried, and shouted to the whites:

"Follow me!"

They did not hesitate. They knew well that, in her wandering life, she had learned more of the passes in those woods and hills, and of the secret hiding-places, than any one in the party. Turning her horse's head to the right, she darted along the bank of the river, followed by all. The cries which came from the forest deepened as they advanced, and, though Edith and Amy trembled, they kept the saddle nobly, and rode as they never rode before. As they dashed into a pass between the hills, a volley was poured in from the pursuing savages. The big hunter glanced hurriedly from face to face, but no one seemed hurt. They had passed through the first line of foemen, and were now among the high hills which were there broken into irregular masses by some mighty convulsion of Nature.

"Dismount!" cried Lealliwah.

They obeyed without question, and each gave his horse a cut to drive him forward. As they did so, Eliza dropped suddenly to the earth, and they saw that the blood was flowing from a ghastly wound in her breast. No one could receive a wound there and live an hour.

"Take her up," said Lealliwah, speaking to the big hunter.

He obeyed, and the Indian girl pushed aside a mass of leaves and underbrush and revealed an opening in the side of the hill. This all entered, one by one, the guide going first, the big hunter following with Eliza, and the white girls next. The bushes closed behind them, hiding the entrance from the view of those outside. A gloom like that of Egypt fell over the place, but they followed on, guided by the footsteps of Lealliwah. After walking for about ten minutes they halted, and producing a flint and steel, and some tinder, the guide soon succeeded in getting a light. Before them lay a number of prepared pine-knot torches, showing that others had been there before. No questions were asked, but all felt a sense of relief, for the gloom was frightful. She lighted one of these torches, and ordering the men to bear the others for future use, the girl led the way again.

They saw now that they had entered one of those remarkable

caves for which Kentucky is so famous. The passage through which they were walking was perhaps ten feet in height and as many wide, the floor being strewn with fragments of limestone which had fallen from the roof. She knew her way well, and at length they came into a large room, the roof of which was hung with stalactites of great beauty, which caught and reflected the light from thousands of dazzling points.

As they entered this room the big hunter called on them to stop, and look to Eliza. Her face, as he laid her down and took her head upon his knee, assumed a ghastly pallor.

No man knew the signs of dissolution better than Ned Harris.

"Hats off, boys," he said, in a mournful tone. "The poor creature has got to her journey's end."

The girls fell on their knees and covered their faces, weeping. Lealliwah tried to staunch the flowing blood, but the effort was in vain. As Eliza felt her touch she opened her eyes, and they knew that her madness was gone. Often in the presence of death, mad people become sane.

"It's of no use," said the dying woman. "My time has come, and I am not sorry it is so. My life for the last twenty years has been full of bitterness, but it is passed. The crime I committed has been atoned for, I hope, on the earth. I pray my merciful Judge will remember my years of punishment and take me to His rest."

"My good woman," said Harris, "do not distress yourself by such thoughts."

"Good? There is none good but one. But, even I can do some good before I die. Is it a phantom of my crazed brain, or did you really come in search of a girl called Constance Harding, who was lost years ago, when a child?"

"My life is devoted to that object."

"Then, thank heaven, I can aid you. Look at Lealliwah! Child, you have lived so long in the woods that it will be hard even for you to believe it. *In Lealliwah, the Queen of the Woods, you see Constance Harding!*"

A cry of surprise broke from the lips of all. Lealliwah trembled and looked from face to face in a sort of dumb surprise. She did not fully comprehend. Eliza felt the strong arm which had sustained her up to this time giving way. The big hunter laid her head in the lap of Edith, and staggered to his feet, reeling like a drunken man.

"Woman!" he cried, "you are dying. As you hope to be saved, speak the truth. Stand back, Ned Harris. If you dare to touch the girl before I am answered, I will kill you."

"As God is my judge," said the dying woman, solemnly, "yonder girl is the daughter of John Harding, who has not been seen since that fatal day, when—"

"The wife he loved lay dead in his arms and his daughter was gone—where, he could not tell. I—I am John Harding! Girl, I understand all now! I know what it is that saved you from my rifle. Come to my arms, child of my dead Julia!"

"Julia!" shrieked Lealliwah. "My mother; my mother!"

The next moment she lay weeping in the arms of her father.

That name had broken the spell which long years had laid upon her memory. She remembered all now—the beautiful home, the mother who loved her, the terrible end of all. John Harding was nearly mad with joy. He kissed her passionately, again and again, upon brow, cheek and lip, calling her by every tender name by which she had been known in childhood, and which seemed familiar to her even as if she had heard them but yesterday. He unbuttoned the sleeve of her buckskin sack and pushed it up above the elbow. They saw that

the skin, though darkened by exposure to the sun, was not that of an Indian, and, near the right shoulder, marked in India ink, they saw the letters, "C. H." in the center of a five-pointed star.

"Ned Harris," said Harding, "Constance is found! Now you know why I listened to you, and why I agreed to go with you to the Valley of Cedars."

Ned advanced, showing little of his ordinary boldness. Her cheeks were in a flame, but she put her little hand in his with a gentle pressure which completed the conquest her beauty had begun.

"You came to find Constance," she said. "Are you glad you have found her?"

"I will lay down my life to save yours," he said, hotly.

She smiled. At this moment, they heard a groan from Eliza. All turned toward her. She had raised herself upon one elbow and was looking at the young couple with an expression of perfect happiness upon her face.

"Stoop down," she whispered. "Both of you."

They knelt beside her, and she took the hand of Constance—Lealliwah no longer—and placed it in that of Ned. Then raising her dying hands above her head, she murmured:

"Heaven bless and protect you." And, with that aspiration on her lips, fell back and died.

"Amen!" said John Harding, fervently; "this poor woman has endured much, in her stay on earth. May this good deed be counted for her in the great day of the Lord. What shall we do with her body?"

"Compose her limbs and let her lie here," said Amy Boone; "what grander place of burial could she possibly have?"

"No," said Constance; "take her up and come with me."

The men lifted the body in silence and followed the torch. Constance led the way to a niche in the wall of the cavern, which was raised a foot or two above the level of the floor. The stalactites, falling from the sides of this natural couch, gave it the appearance of a bed with drapery. They laid her down to rest—the woman of many sorrows. It was a strange burial, worthy of the sleeper. No hand would ever disturb her remains. A reverent silence fell on everyone, and kissing for the last time that marble brow, Constance led the way back.

"Our danger is great," said Ned. "How are we to escape?"

"I have no fears," said John Harding, whose face had lost the expression of suffering for which it had been distinguished. "I have recovered all I care for on earth. Do you love me, Constance? Can you forget the wild life you have led, for my sake?"

She kissed him.

"I give you this kiss," she said, "to answer your first question. The last was answered when you spoke the name of my mother; then I remembered all—I knew that I was the Constance for whom Harris sought, and I knew many things I had forgotten."

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE LOG LIFE-PRESERVER.

"HEAVENS, where is Massaquoit?"

All turned in surprise and dismay. The chief was indeed gone! Constance remembered that when they dismounted at the entrance to the cave the Mohawk was not there. Had the brave man fallen a victim to the volley which had been so fatal to Eliza?

"I'll tell you what," said Nathan, "if Massy has gone under, it's the end of the best Injin that ever tramped the woods."

"I hope he is safe," said John Harding, uneasily; "he is a brave man, and to him, as much as any other, I owe the recovery of my daughter. I am afraid that, in

trying to work out some scheme for our safety, he has lost his life."

"Let us hope for the best," said Ned. "Constance, how many besides yourself are acquainted with the entrance to this place?"

"Only two."

"And who are they?"

"One is Simon Girty, the other is Telonga."

"Your Indian lover?"

Constance laughed and nodded.

"Then, if they know the entrance, we must prepare to fight, for they will surely come."

"Not come here," said Constance, who had not lost the peculiarities of speech which she had learned among the Indians; "afraid to do that. Only two can come at a time; a tribe can't drive us out."

"That is true," said Ned; "but is there no way of escape open for us?"

"Yes," said Constance. "Not stay here; come!"

They again took up their line of march. After traveling over half a mile in the bowels of the earth, they went up an inclined plane, and crawling one by one through a narrow opening, found themselves in the open air, upon the bank of the river. Constance led the way at a quick pace along the bank, keeping as much as possible in the shadow of the trees. After going about two miles, they came to a place where a pile of weeds and brushwood were thrown over a log.

"Look under the bushes," said Constance; "two canoe dere."

Harris threw off the brush, and showed two light canoes hidden there, with paddles and every thing complete.

Ned, Constance and John Harding entered one of the canoes. Nathan and the two redeemed captives took the other, and they pushed out from the bank.

As they did so, savage yells announced that they were discovered. They must now work for their lives, for there, in three canoes, they saw a large party of savages. In the foremost, distinguished by his great stature and his commanding air, they recognized Telonga. In the next, working at the paddle like a galley-slave, came Simon Girty. It was no time to dally. Every girl took a paddle and went to work. They knew that the heavily-manned canoes behind them must eventually overtake them; but they hoped for help—from what source they could not tell. Not a shot was fired; Telonga feared to hazard the life of Constance, and Simon Girty was equally loth to injure any of the prisoners, all of whom he was determined to recapture, and then to have his fill of revenge.

"Push on for your lives!" cried the big hunter; "they gain upon us."

The light canoe fairly leaped under the strong arms of the speaker and Ned Harris. They were leaving the other canoe behind; doubtless they might have escaped by leaving Nathan and the two girls to the mercy of the savages. Such a thought never entered their minds, and they traveled no faster than was necessary to keep them side by side with their friends. Suddenly the face of John Harding lighted up, and, with a ringing cheer, he turned the head of the canoe into the bank. Nathan followed his example, and leaving the frail barks upon the bank, the party darted into the woods. They heard the astonished yells of the savages and the oaths of Girty, as they dashed aside the water in their mad efforts to reach the shore in turn. They knew for what John Harding was running. As their canoes touched the shore, a stentorian shout from Harding announced that he had gained his point.

What was it? A ruined block-house. Some pioneer had built it for the safety of himself and his family; but In-

dian craft had triumphed over him, and his fate had been to die by the hatchet of the Shawnee. The house had been left in nearly the same condition as when built, the door still swung by one hinge, but four stout bars remained with which to fasten it.

"In! in!" cried John Harding; "they are close at hand."

All hurried in, and the men hastily put up the bars. They had hardly done so when the Indians appeared. Ned and Nathan discharged their rifles, and two Shawnees fell to rise no more. This action intimidated the rest, and they contented themselves by yelling in the bushes until the arrival of Telonga. He came up soon with Girty by his side.

"What does this yer mean?" demanded the renegade. "They've got away."

"Not so, my brother; they are in the big house."

"Yes; an' thar they're likely to stay until Boone comes up from Booneville to help 'em. It sarves us right. We orter lose 'em. Why didn't we fire at 'em?"

"My brother Girty must remember that we must save the lives of the daughter of Boone and of Lealliwah. What is it to me if she has forgotten the people who have reared her and made her happy? She must be mine. The daughter of the Shawnees must always remain so, no matter what she may think. When the young white man's scalp hangs at my belt, then she will forget him, and remember only the great chief Telonga, the head of his powerful nation."

"She ain't goin' to forgit; don't you go to b'lieve it, Shawnee. She's got her durned head set on him, an' she'll hev him tu. Don't say I didn't tell ye."

"My brother is very kind," said Telonga. "One might almost say he spoke of these things to make me angry. If this is true let him beware what he does, for a great chief knows how to avenge an insult well—let him look to it."

"I meant no insult," said Girty, cowering before the angry glance of the chief. "Naturally enough, I don't like it that they are likely to git away. We must git 'em out of that somehow."

"I will go to him said Telonga; "I will speak with Lealliwah!"

"Du it, chief; it mout du some good, though I don't think it. Go along."

The chief threw his blanket over his shoulder and advanced boldly into the open space in front of the hut, careless of the fact that three deadly rifles were aimed at his heart. As he advanced he raised his right hand and showed a belt of white wampum. He knew enough of the usages of war among the whites to be sure they would respect this symbol. He was right. The moment they saw the belt every rifle was lowered, and the chief was suffered to advance. He came forward until he stood within ten feet of the block, when he was halted by Harding.

"What do you seek here?" the big hunter asked, in the Indian tongue.

"Telonga is chief of the Shawnees. He would have a talk with his white brothers."

The door was thrown open and Harding appeared upon the threshold. Telonga started slightly as he saw his face.

"Do you know me?" demanded Harding.

"Who does not know the big hunter of the Shawnees?" said the chief. "I speak to a brave man. I also speak to one who is just to the red-man, even though he slays them. Telonga has only come for his own."

"What does the chief claim?"

"He has come for his wife, Lealliwah, Queen of the Woods, is the promised wife of the chief. Some one has come among us and stolen away the heart of the maiden from her people."

"Who are her people?" de-

manded Harding, looking the chief full in the face.

"The Shawnees," said the chief, turning away his head.

"Let the chief look back over twelve years and see if he can remember. A man lived near Harrisville. He was happy. He had a wife whom he loved, and a child which he adored. But, the Indians rose and chased him from his home. His wife was killed as he held her in his arms. Where did the child go?"

"How should Telonga know? Elenipsico was in the woods then. But, that chief roams no more."

"Stop," said Harding. "That man went out into the woods, with his heart set like a flint against the Indians. He killed them wherever they were found. He had only one thought, and that was to find the child he had lost, if she was above the sod."

"He was right," said the chief.

"He has found her!" shouted Harding. "Red-skin, only the white wampum protects you. Lealliwh is that child, and I, her father, have a higher claim upon her than you can ever have."

The head of Telonga sunk upon his breast. The blow was a terrible one to him. He had waited for years for the time to come when Lealliwh should come into his wigwam.

The dream was over!

"I have a little to say," he said at last, in a hollow voice. "Since the child was taken from the dead arms of the black woman, Telonga has seen her grow up like a flower. He has taught her to love the Shawnee and hate the white man. He can not think his teaching has all been in vain. Let her come out and speak to me, and if she loves the white man best, Telonga will go."

"Constance," said Harding, "will you come out?"

Telonga started at the vision which appeared at the open door.

Under the instructions of the other girls she had washed every vestige of paint from her face, and taken the arrows from her hair. The luxuriant mass fell half way to her feet, forming a sort of golden-brown mantle. She clasped her hands about her father's arm and stood looking the chief in the face.

"Lealliwh!" the Shawnee cried.

She made no answer.

"Speak to me," he pleaded. "You who have been so long Queen of the Woods, let me hear your voice. Have you forgotten what the Shawnees have been to you?"

"I no longer answer to the name of Lealliwh, chief. As Constance Harding, I will hear your words—as Constance Harding I will answer them," she said.

The chief bowed his head sadly, as she said this. He evidently gave up all hope.

"Then Lealliwh is dead," he said, "and I am again Telonga, chief of the Shawnees. All here are my enemies. I go, but I will come again."

"Stop, chief," said Constance, speaking in a hurried tone. "Before you go let me thank you for the kindness you have always shown me while I was a Shawnee. I can never forget that. I have no enemy among the Shawnees, unless it is that wretch, Girty. When I came to you, I was a little child. You reared me tenderly. You taught the tribe to respect me, and they have always done so. I should be ungrateful if I did not thank you, for without your aid, my fate might have been terrible. Give me the wampum belt, and I will keep it always in memory of the great chief, Telonga."

The chief took off the belt and threw it over her neck. At the same time he shook a threatening hand at Harris, as he stood in the doorway.

"Look to yourself, dog," he shouted. "Before many hours your scalp shall hang in my belt. You have done this thing. Had you never come among us, Lealliwh would still be the daughter

and Queen of the Shawnees."

"I care little for your threats," said Harris, haughtily.

"Then meet me where we stand with knife and hatchet, to prove which is the better man."

Harris half drew his knife and made a spring at the speaker, but Harding caught him with his disengaged hand and threw him back, saying:

"Respect the symbol of peace."

"I beg pardon, Harding," said the young man. "I forgot. He taunted me, or I should not have done it."

"Let him come on," cried Telonga, "and try the strength of a Shawnee arm. My knife is sharp. It will drink the blood of a white villain."

"Be quiet," said Harding. "Is this a time or place for brawling? You have made your demand and been refused. Now go about your business, and remember this: we shall fight while a man of us can lift a hand, and your men have already felt the power of our rifles."

The chief only answered by a look of hatred as he strode away, never deigning to look back, nor doubting the faith of the men he was leaving, who might have shot him in the back as he walked slowly away.

"Telonga is very angry," said Constance; "Harris must not fight him."

"Don't call me Harris; my name is Ned," said the young man.

"Net," said Constance, clipping the name up in the prettiest manner possible, "you must not fight him."

"I hope he will only give me a chance," was the reply. "I hope you do not think I am afraid of any one Indian? That is not the way of the border."

"Telonga will kill you."

"Not a bit of it," rejoined Ned, piqued by the intimation that he was not a match for the savage. "I will try him some day; then see if I am not right."

The girl hung her head. It was fear for the safety of Ned which prompted her to oppose a combat with the chief. Harris took her hand and led her to a place a little apart from the rest, and sat down at her feet, where he remained talking to her in a manner which brought the telltale blood to her cheeks.

CHAPTER XLIV.

TO THE RESCUE!

THE sudden crack of the rifle of the big hunter interrupted the young folks' talk and announced that the enemy was again in sight. Harris sprang to a loop-hole and immediately perceived that the enemy were about to make an attack. Numbers of the painted rascals could be seen at various points in the underbrush about the clearing, and it was plain that they had been reinforced by those who were on foot during the chase on the river. The rifles of the besieged began to speak out now, and yells of rage and anguish from the outlying savages told with what effect.

"Give it to 'em," yelled Nathan. "That's right. Who-o-o-o-p! Take that, you painted riptile. That's fer Massachewsetts. Oh, git out."

"Mark that big fellow crawling up under the pine," cried Harding, in a cheerful voice. "Oh, if we only had Massaquoit to keep the other side of the house we could whip a tribe of them. How long did old Boone keep them off alone?"

"Seventeen days," said Harris, as he discharged his rifle at the man indicated by Harding. "I don't think that Indian will lope about in the woods any more."

"I want to see Girty," said Harding. "If I once draw bead on him, his knell is tolled. I'd pay him for his abuse of that poor woman."

"Eliza is at rest," said Constance. "No hand will disturb

her now. She very kind to me. Love me very much."

"Who could help that?" said Ned. "I can't, for one."

"Make him stop, father," said the girl, flushing with pleasure. "He too bad."

"Keep out of range!" cried Harding. "The lad won't hurt you by talking, little one. Do you see that fellow in the tree, Nathan?"

"Sartainly I do."

"Ask him out of that."

The down-easter was a good shot. An Indian had climbed into the top of a tree, nearly in the center of the open ground, from which he was dropping arrows into the loop-holes of the block-house. One of these had passed unpleasantly near Harding's head.

Nathan raised his rifle. The savage, unconscious of his danger, was fitting another arrow to the bow when the rifle cracked. The leaden messenger sped upward and struck him in the middle of the forehead, directly above the nose. They saw him bound upward and fall across the limb, where he remained swaying in the breeze, in the sight of his comrades.

Yells of deadly hatred greeted the awful sight, to which the besieged only answered with their rifles. At length they heard the signal for assault. The savages leaped to their feet, and charged with an impetuosity rarely seen in savage warfare. But, the fire of the rifles was too deadly. They could not stand it, and broke before they reached the house. As they retreated, there came upon their ears a ringing border cheer, and the inmates of the block-house knew that succor was at hand.

The Indians only needed that to complete their confusion. They broke and fled in disorder, while the riflemen bounded forward on the trail, holding their terrible weapons ready for use. Girty escaped to the other bank of the river, in company with Telonga. But, few of the others ever saw their native villages again.

The hunters came trooping back, with Boone striding ahead. By his side was Harrod, the silent hunter, his rifle smoking in his hand. Boone suffered his rifle to drop from his grasp, and looked with humid eyes at the face of Harris, Harding, and Nathan. The girls kept out of sight.

"Have you seen Massaquoit?" was the first question of Harris.

"Oh, yes. The old feller is gone off on a hot trail. He jest brought me word a party of you were bein' chased into a hole in the ground, t'other side of the river. We got so fur on the way up, when we hearn yer rifles. Ye ain't seen nothin' of the gals? Massy wouldn't tell me."

"Do you mean of Amy?"

"In course I do. An' Edith Calloway. Come, don't make me wait; a father is a father. You ain't one now."

"Tell him, quickly," said Harding. "I know what it is to suffer a loss like that. Don't keep him in suspense."

"My gal is gone too," said Colonel Calloway, who stood near Boone. "Speak it out, Harris. We air men, an' kin b'ar the worst."

"Then I'll tell you. Here; I want you," cried Harris.

The girls heard the signal and sprang from their hiding-places. The next moment each was in her father's arms, alternately sobbing and laughing as they recounted the perils of that terrible time in which they had been captives among the Shawnees.

"That scoundrel, Massy. He never told me," said Boone. "No, I won't call him that. Ef it hadn't been fur him, the girls mout never 'a come back at all. Harris, don't ask me to say much, but, ef the time ever comes when I kin act, I'm the man."

"All right, squire. Don't say another word. I confess that my motive in going into the Indian

village was to find the lost child of John Harding."

"I don't s'pose you've had any luck. You deserve it though," said Boone.

"I have, though, had the best of luck. I have found the object of my search. Constance, come here."

The girl came quietly out of the block-house at the call. Boone started back in surprise. He recognized her at once.

"Ain't that the gal that gave us water when we was in the hitch that day?"

"Yes."

"Durn me ef I didn't think she was too hansum fur an Injin," said Boone. "This beats every thing. Who is this man?"

"This is the man whom you have known as the big hunter of the Shawnee. He is John Harding, whose daughter I hold by the hand. We saved her together, and she shall be ours through life. Mr. Harding, this is Daniel Boone."

The two border men clasped hands, and looked at each other with beaming eyes. Each was the beau-ideal of a borderer. Boone, tall, muscular, and full of muscle, saw that Harding rose above him.

"I'm glad you've found your darter, Harding. I am, by gracious. I know what it is to lose a darter, and find her ag'in. Here's Amy, now, I want to hug her ag'in. Nathan Hicks, I'll remember this ag'in' you. It was you that helped to git my darter out of the hands of the red-skins."

"'Twas me, by gravy," said Nat; "and as sure as you live, that darter of yours has got about the pootiest pair of eyes in her head I ever seen."

"Mr. Hicks?" said Amy, in a deprecating tone.

"It's so. I don't give it up. The darnedest pair of twinklers in the world. I'll maintain it, with knife or rifle, ag'in' any man that dare to say they ain't."

"Nat Hicks," said Boone. "you've been a sort of vagabond for years, partly through bad luck. Now, you quit that, and take up a section of land near Booneville. You had better do so, too, Harding."

"I can not be sure of what I will do," said Harding. "My aim in life henceforth is to make my daughter happy. But for her, young as I still am, I should pray for death, as a happy relief from the torments of life. Half that life has come back to me. I can never be a truly happy man. That hope went from me when Julia lay dead in these arms."

He paused, and his voice broke. Constance laid her hand upon his shoulder, and passed her arm about his neck.

"Don't Harding, don't," said Boone. "I can't b'ar it, nohow. Come. We've all lost friends, fust and last. Mebbe not many of us such a friend as you have, unless it's Harrod. Yes, the silent hunter has suffered as great a loss as you."

"Harrod drew near and silently extended his hand. He, too, had lost a dear wife by the bloody hands of the savages. Harding grasped his hand. Neither spoke a word, but they understood each other."

"Sich is life," said Boone. "Some air to die and some air to live. My wife is safe so fur along the road. You nor I can't say how long that safety will last for either of us. Come along."

"Where now?" said Harding.

"To Booneville. There you may all find homes. The hearts of the people are open. Most of you have money, but, if you have not, a beautiful land lies open before you, and you can all claim your share. Much of suffering, much of privation must be borne, before we can make Kentucky what we would have it. But the end will be glorious."

The party set out on their march and in a few hours were at Booneville.

CHAPTER XLV.

CONCLUSION.

THE remaining events of this tale belong to history. It would be idle to tell of the days of probation Ned Harris had to pass through, before Constance would consent to be his wife. And, when he was once established as her accepted lover, she used often to threaten him with a return to her Indian lover, Telonga. It was wonderful how quickly she improved among the whites. The language she had learned in childhood came back to her quickly, and, in a few months nothing remained of her peculiarities of pronunciation except an occasional "d" where "th" should have been used. Harris used to rally her on the persistency with which she clung to this method of pronunciation; and, though she tried hard to correct it, yet it was over a year before she could fully accomplish the desired reform.

All things must have an end, and so did the courtship of Ned Harris. A year passed. Ned had cleared a farm and built a house, and was ready to receive his bride. And, one pleasant day in the summer weather, under the shadow of a mighty tree, the young people stood up in the presence of the people of Booneville, and Squire Boone, as justice of the peace, spoke the solemn words which joined these hearts together. Harris looked noble in his hunting-shirt of green, for they aped no fashions on the borders of Kentucky. Constance, in her simple dress, was gloriously beautiful. Her beauty did not need the aid of ornament—at least, so Harris thought, as he printed the first kiss of a husband upon her brow.

And, who is this in a gorgeous coat of green homespun, with big horn buttons, who, with Amy Boone, "stands up" with the young couple? Who but our worthy friend Nathan, now the owner of a well-stocked farm near the settlement. His ragged clothing had not been a good indicator of the man's real worldly condition, and they found, when the time came, that he had various golden coins stored away, enough to stock his farm and buy a house. Report says, Amy Boone and the Yankee propose to follow *suit* and get spliced, and that Squire Boone is agreed.

The words are spoken, and the Queen of the Woods ceases to be other than Ned Harris' wife. John Harding stepped forward to congratulate the young couple. As his eye rested upon his child clad in her simple wreath of field-flowers, and her hair falling in waving brown masses to her waist, the sight was too much for the strong man. It reminded him too strongly of his own happy bridal morning, and of the terrible ending which came. Constance saw him falter, and knew the cause. Springing to his side, she threw her arms about his neck, and laid her head upon his breast. The men cheered madly. The women wept. And, in the confusion, Nathan Hicks got "round on t'other side" and kissed Amy Boone, to the delight of that portion of the audience who witnessed the occurrence. But, when order was restored, and the other friends were advancing to salute the bride and groom, Nat was again in his proper place, bolt upright, looking as innocent of any attempt at fraud as it was possible for a man to look in a high-pointed collar; "an Israelite indeed." Even Massaquoit grinned as he beheld him.

A barbecue followed, and people came from far and near, armed to the teeth, to witness the wedding. The festivities were kept up far into the night, long after the young couple had disappeared. Nat Hicks was the happiest man among them, and led the dance which followed the barbecue in a manner which he, as well as his pretty partner, considered highly creditable. And they kept it up until the fires went out, and morning was near at hand.

Two years pass. Step by step the Shawnees had receded before the white men in spite of the stubborn efforts of Telonga. But, the brave chief never faltered. At length the contest was brought to a final trial, and the Indians and white men met upon the banks of the Kentucky. It was a desperate fray, continuing from sunrise to sunset. The day's close witnessed the whites' triumph, though at a fearful loss.

The sun was going down, and the Indians, dispirited by repeated repulses, began to retreat. At this juncture, Telonga rushed to the front, waving his hatchet, red with the blood of the white men he had met. His dark eyes blazed. A look of sullen hate showed itself in his face.

"Sons of the Shawnee," he cried, "will you give up your hunting-ground to the spoiler? Behold, they are before you. Rush upon them like the whirlwind in its fury, and sweep them from your path. Do you give back? Follow Telonga; and, if you see him go backward, let the warrior who stands next strike him dead at his feet."

"Charge!" shouted Ned Harris, suddenly appearing at the head of the white line.

"At 'em!" roared Boone.

With one impulse, Indian and white man leaped at each other's throat. All through that day Ned Harris had been striving to reach Telonga or Girty; but the renegade wisely kept out of his sight. John Harding was there, raging like a lion, striking down a savage at every

blow. He stood in front with a hatchet in his hand such as few could swing, and the red-men shrunk before his mighty arms.

At last, with a thrill of joy at each heart, Ned and Telonga met.

"Ah-ha! son of the pale-face woman," cried the Indian; "we meet in the front of battle. I am Telonga, the Shawnee. No white man can stand before my arm. I will take your scalp, and then I will go to Lealliwah and take her again to the lodges of the Shawnees."

"Don't stop to brag, red-skin," said Ned. "If you are ready, so am I."

Telonga uttered a furious yell, and made a sudden rush at him. Each of the combatants holding a knife in his left hand, and a hatchet in his right, made a double stroke as they closed. The hatchet of Ned glanced from the frontal bone of the Indian, while his knife was employed in warding off the blow of Telonga's ax. He received in return a slight wound from the knife in the shoulder. The blow which Telonga had received was a heavy one, and staggered him for a moment; but he recovered himself, and, with a bound like a tiger, leaped at the throat of Harris. Each dropped his hatchet as they clasped, and they fell to the ground together locked in each other's arms. By superior skill Harris maintained the vantage by falling on his foe—his knees planted on the arms of the Indian, and his knife at his throat.

"Yield, you red dog!" cried Ned, "or you die!"

"Telonga does not know how to yield," replied the chief; "he has seen the last hope of his people pass away, and he no longer cares to live. Strike!"

But the blow fell not.

"You are a brave man," said Harris; "I'll not strike your death-blow. Stand up, chief."

As Telonga rose to his feet, disarmed and at the mercy of Ned, Simon Girty suddenly appeared at the rear of the Indian line and fired. The unfortunate chief was the salvation of Harris. The ball struck him just behind the shoulder, and passed through his lungs in a diagonal course. He dropped at the feet of his conqueror with a set, stony face. The young man bent over him.

"Who shoot?" whispered the wounded man.

"Girty," replied the white man. "He fired at me."

"Bad heart," said the chief. "No good to take white man into wigwam. I die, and as I go, I see the ruin of my people. The Shawnees will stand up no more before the warriors of Boone. Telonga is ready to die."

The blood in his throat choked his utterance. He rose on his elbow with an effort and looked back. The Shawnees were again in full retreat, the foresters pressing on their rear, striking them down without mercy. A cry of almost mortal anguish broke from the lips of the chief.

"My people—my people!" he cried, covering his face with his hands. Harris could not help commiserating the grand sorrow of the savage, who again choked, as more blood rushed to his throat.

"I die," he said; "say to the woman who is now your wife, and who was and is Lealliwah, Queen of the Woods, that I loved her well. She is yours now; but if Telonga had lived, she should have been one of the Shawnees again."

A yell from the Shawnees, as they made a momentary stand against the men of Boone, brought a brief gleam to the chief's eyes, which left them as the feeble cry was drowned by the stentorian cries of the white men. He dropped to the earth again, and was dead.

Of Simon Girty little more is to be said. Protected by the master whom he served, he escaped many dangers, living a miserable life, and died a horrible death. It is stated that, at times, in the solemn night, the figure of the wronged and murdered Eliza appeared, a ghastly presence, near his bed, sending terror to his wretched soul.

John Harding learned to be a happy man in the home of his son-in-law. Children began to grow up about him—merry laughter made the house ring. He could not be content to remain at home, and made frequent excursions into the woods accompanied sometimes by Nat Hicks or Ned; but more often by Massaquoit, who had made so many friends in this vicinity that he loved to pass his time there.

The Indian was hale and hardy, and many a fat buck, with branching antlers, the two friends brought to the village.

Constance forgot her former habits almost entirely; but she still loved the woods, and was fond of rambling in them. There were times, too, when thoughts of her wandering life would come to her even in her happy home. Then she would draw her children to her knee and tell them tales of the forest, in which she had been an actor.

The story is told. From these pioneer families a mighty State has arisen, whose daughters are fair, and whose sons are brave, and who are proud to trace their descent from Boone, Harris, Kenton, and Hicks. Little did they dream, when they raised their cabins by the silent river, of the wonderful fate in store for the little colony.

THE END.

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